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LECTURES ON PREACHING.

DELIVERED TO THE

STUDENTS OF YALE COLLEGE, IN 1879.

BY

REV. MATTHEW SIMPSON, D.D.,

BISHOP OF METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, NEW YORK.



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“*Voted*, To accept the offer of Mr. HENRY N. SAGE, of Brooklyn, of the sum of ten thousand dollars, for the founding of a Lectureship in the Theological Department, in a branch of Pastoral Theology, to be designated ‘The Lyman Beecher Lectureship on Preaching,’ to be filled from time to time, upon the appointment of the Corporation, by a minister of the Gospel, of any evangelical denomination, who has been markedly successful in the special work of the Christian ministry.”

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I.

THE PREACHER'S WORK.

DR. LEONARD BACON opened the course by the following remarks :

"It is understood, of course, that these Lyman Beecher Lectures are for and to students of theology—the students of this school. They are not addressed to the public at large. They are not of the nature of an amusement for the public. They mean *business*; and we have invited for this year a distinguished preacher to give the results of his long experience in the form of counsels to these students. Well, there are a great many ministers here who are, I trust, themselves students even yet; and it won't hurt them to hear it. And they are welcome; and others are welcome. Our friends who are present here are welcome to the privilege and enjoyment, and profit—as, I trust, they will find—of hearing the lectures which begin to-day. And now I have the pleasure of introducing to you the Rev. Dr. Simpson, one of the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church."

BISHOP SIMPSON: *Young Gentlemen*: How natural is it for a speaker to wish to say something before he begins! Hence I may indulge in a few preliminary remarks. And first of all I wish to express my high esteem of the practical wisdom and catholic spirit which influenced the founder of this lectureship. So far as I know, this is the first endowment of a lectureship devoted specially to preaching. Homiletics and the pastoral office, including preaching, have long been in the curriculum of the theological seminary; but this chair is devoted specially to the subject of preaching. It is an agency by which God has promised to save them that believe; and, if so, it is the most important that was ever committed to human hands, and surely

it is worthy of a higher place than that of being simply a department of sacred rhetoric. And, notwithstanding this chair may be sometimes imperfectly filled; notwithstanding I may be able to say nothing which shall add to the stores of knowledge or prove stronger motives to young men pursuing the ministry; yet I have no doubt that from this chair, from time to time, suggestions and thoughts will be uttered which shall add increasing interest to the subject of preaching, and claim more generally the attention of the people. The catholic spirit, too, which made the platform so broad that a minister of any Evangelical school might stand upon it, will command the approbation of the Christian world. The Corporation of Yale College and the theological faculty have manifested the same unchanged and liberal views in selecting ministers of various churches, and have drawn on the Old World, as well as on the New. The utterances which have been made from this desk by distinguished and talented speakers have not only reached the hearts of all classes, but have gone forth from the press, and have influenced hundreds of candidates to higher aspirations and to more thorough consecration. I desire also to acknowledge specially the courtesy of the Corporation and theological faculty in inviting me to occupy this chair for the present term. Yet I do not understand this to be so much a compliment to myself as an expression of their continued purpose to invite ministers from various denominations and from different sections of the country. Had this invitation been one of ordinary character, I should have promptly declined. My ecclesiastical duties are so constant and so pressing as to allow me but little time for preparing lectures; and my labours are so numerous and so varied that they tax my strength to the uttermost. I wished, however, to respond to this manifestation of courtesy, and to aid in showing to the world that Protestant Christendom is essentially *one*; that, though we do not wholly agree, we at the same time know how to differ and how to love. Besides, I found my Methodism at stake. One of your professors, whom I profoundly honour, suggested that, though busily occupied, I could still find time to tell my experience. And so I, who am of Western birth and education, and a minister in the

Methodist Episcopal Church, am here to address you, who are chiefly sons of New England, and who are Congregationalists in creed and church polity. Verily, the world moves! A hundred years ago this would have been an impossibility.

A few years ago a distinguished journalist published a book entitled "What I Know about Farming." I am not sure that his success in that line would lead many to follow his example. And yet I have thought that the lecturer in this chair might not inaptly term his utterances, "What I Know about Preaching." But he is not to lecture systematically on homiletics and the pastoral charge (a work well performed by your regular professors); but to supplement their teaching by his own experience, and by gleanings from every side. Thus I meet you to-day in the chapel of one of the oldest and noblest institutions of the land, and in the presence of men of mind and might. But let us forget for a time the presence of these sages, as well as the smiles of beauty around us, and let you and me address ourselves simply to the lesson of this hour as fellow-students, for such we are; differing a little in age, but of one aim and of one heart. You have pursued your academic and collegiate training. You are now interested in the theological investigation. Your earnest thought is turned towards the future, and the inquiry is how you can most successfully preach the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

How rapidly the years pass away! It seems scarcely more than yesterday that, as a young man, I was asking myself the same question. I remember how the future opened before me, and what a responsibility pressed upon my heart, as I thought of standing in the sacred desk to preach to my fellow-men.

Vast as the work seemed to me then, it has grown upon me in magnitude. Each succeeding year I behold in a clearer light the importance and responsibility of the sacred office. I recognize to-day the immense vastness of the work, and my own inadequacy to treat its important demands, or even to picture before you that ideal which for years has beckoned me onward, and which I have never been able to attain. I am consoled, however, by the thought that you have other instructors at whose feet you reverently sit, and who will say to you in fitting language that which

I may leave unsaid. If I may even chance to vary from their teaching, and, Arminian as I am, to utter something heterodox, it may but serve to stir your minds and afford your professors an excellent opportunity to add variety to their lectures by exposing my fallacies and proving the unsoundness of my views.

Preaching is the chief work, but not the only work, of the Christian minister. He organizes churches and leads the public devotions of the people, administers the ordinances, and superintends important improvements, both within and without his own congregation. Yet all these works bear a distinct relation to his office as a preacher. They enter into and issue from it, or are auxiliary to it. St. Paul exalted the department of the preacher above every other department of church work, when he said to the Corinthians: "Christ sent me to preach the Gospel." The first great requisite to the success of the young minister is, I think, to have a clear appreciation of the character of the wonderful work upon which he enters, especially in his own duties and responsibilities.

Only to a few prominent points can we now refer. First, in *its origin*, it is ordained of God. Other professions arise out of human wants, and are essential to human comfort. They vary according to the circumstances and the progress of humanity. The teacher is required to educate the children and youth. The tailor, the shoemaker, and the hatter are essential to our comfort and health. The physician is needed wherever sickness may occur, and the surgeon wherever accidents may happen. The profession of the attorney, unknown in savage lands, is demanded where laws become complicated or where interests are conflicting.

Christian preaching arises not so much from perceived necessity, as from God's special ordinances. So true is this that where preaching is unknown or neglected the demand for it is not so strong as where it is established and regularly maintained. Yet in all ages where there has been worship there has been a ministry. The religious idea of the race prompts to worship, and in times of providential emergency and seasons of distress to make offerings to some superior power. These offerings are made through persons in some way selected or set apart for this purpose. The

savages have their incantations, and their sacrifices, and their priests. The Indians of our Western wilds have mediciné-men, who not only heal the body, but profess to hold communion with the unseen. The Chinese have their joss-houses, and their priests even, though their prayers be written on paper, and painted on wood, and whirled around by machinery. Ancient history in its earliest outlines finds priests among the Egyptians, soothsayers among the Babylonians. Phœnicia and Rome had their temples, oracles, and officiating priests. They slew sacrifices, inspected entrails, and divined the will of the gods. They were so closely connected with the welfare of the nation that assemblies were convened and broken up, great enterprises set on foot and abandoned, as the augurs interpreted the omens and signs which they had seen. In all these cases ceremonial was almost everything; instruction next to nothing.

Yet among the ancients there were *mysteries* which included both ceremonials and doctrines. The teachings were only for the few who wished to learn, and they received the name of *mysteries*, which St Paul transferred to the Christian writings. The word is used by him not meaning, as I think, "*secrecy*," or what is difficult to understand, but a system of religion, or the doctrine in that system. The priests to a certain extent instructed the people, and were also the defenders of the poor and oppressed. The altar was a place of refuge, where the offender sought safety and placed himself under the protection of the deity. Those who ministered at their temples and altars were invested, in the estimation of the people, with peculiar sanctity, and were supposed to hold communion with the gods. Both in the temples and at the oracles women served, as well as men. The Vestal Virgins were deemed sacred. Crimes on their part and offences against them were most severely punished. Yet that sanctity with which they were regarded was something wholly apart from pure and high morality. In India and Eastern countries the ministers are highly esteemed. They are students, ministers, and teachers.

How these ideas of sacrifice and priesthood originally arose we need not now inquire. The fact stands out. We learn that

everywhere there were officiating ministers, and that society regarded them with veneration and awe. From Scripture history we learn that the offering of sacrifices was as old as the time of Abel, his offering having been in some manner acceptable to God. Religious instruction was also given by public teachers. We are informed by Jude that "Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied." This prophesying of the ancients embraced not only visions of the future, but instruction in religious duties as well. We are also informed that Noah was a "preacher of righteousness," and that, coming out of the ark, he offered sacrifices. The various families and nations of the earth descending from him may thus have received both these ideas. The direct authority for the ministry, however, is found in the Jewish system. A whole tribe is set apart for the performance of various functions, and a specific family selected for its holiest duties. These priests in large convocations read to the people from the Book of the Lord; but the principal part of their work was ceremonial, connected with the tabernacle and temple. The Christian ministry, however, is not a succession of the Jewish priesthood, so far as the performance of sacrifices is concerned. So far that law was a shadowing of good things to come. And Christ *has come!* He is the end of that "law of righteousness to them that believe." The ceremonial law must needs have been performed to make the Jew a righteous man. Our Saviour said to John the Baptist: "Thus it becometh us to follow righteousness." That righteousness which came by ceremonial law is now supplanted by faith in Christ. You, young gentlemen, are not to be priests. One eternal, all-sufficient sacrifice has been offered by our great High Priest, who has passed into the heavens. Instead of priests, he has given to the church apostles, evangelists, and teachers. The Christian ministry of to-day more nearly resembles the prophets who were selected for the uttering of the will of God, without reference to tribe or family; to warn and to administer and to instruct, as well as to tell what should be in the coming years. And to these prophets Christ Himself is likened. Moses said: "The Lord your God *will raise up unto you a prophet from among the children of*

men." And in the Epistle to the Hebrews it is said: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son." In this *speaking* sense you are to be prophets, rather than priests. The divine appointment of the Christian ministry is specifically set forth in the New Testament. Christ selected twelve apostles, as He called them, individually, to follow Him. He had gathered them around Him for instruction. And also the sending forth was a public and a solemn act. He had retired into a mountain; all night He had been in prayer; and when it was day He called His disciples around Him, and out of them He chose twelve, whom He sent abroad to preach the Gospel and heal all manner of sicknesses. Christ represents Himself as sent into the world to *preach*. He says, quoting the well-known prophecy of Isaiah, and applying it to Himself: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives." And in His inimitable prayer He says of His apostles: "As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world." Among His last words were those of the great commission: "Go ye forth and preach the Gospel to every creature." In entering, then, into the ministry, you ally yourselves with God, and take upon you an office which He Himself specifically ordained.

Secondly. The greatness of the ministerial office is also seen in *its nature* and *its work*. This is illustrated by comparing it to various earthly offices and duties. The word "*preach*," in its primary signification—or, at least, one of the apostle's words for *preaching*—means to "*proclaim*." *κηρυκός*, or herald, was an officer carrying and announcing a message, and was usually sent by a king or commanding officer in an army. His message was short, and was given without explanations or reasons. So John the Baptist simply proclaimed: "Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." In the same way, Christ entered on His own ministry, and when the disciples were first sent forth, the simple message He gave them was: "Repent

ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." The man was a herald or preacher, no matter what the character of the tidings which he bore. Jonah was sent to Nineveh, and his prophetic message was: "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown." So also Nehemiah was accused of appointing preachers to proclaim himself king. As the Gospel was unfolded, this idea of a herald was enlarged by making it the bearer of good tidings, and instead of heralds they became evangelists. Instead of Christ's saying, as He sent His disciples forth, "Go, herald!" we have "Go, preach!" You are sent forth not only to cry, "All flesh is grass;" but to cry also, "The Word of the Lord endureth for ever." Your office is not to speak of yourselves, nor to speak words which the wisest men have uttered; but to speak the message which God has given you. This message of good tidings he has put in writing. It has been printed. We have it in our hands. It has been made plain upon tablets, that he may learn who readeth. The office of the ambassador is one of the highest filled by a citizen. He bears a message from his government—a message he may not add to, and from which he must not subtract. His words are the words of the nation. His person is secured by the power of the nation. He represents in his person the honour and dignity of the nation. The grander and stronger the government, the greater the ambassador. What, then, must be an ambassador for Christ! If you enter on this office you are ambassadors sent by Christ to represent Him, to utter His words to all the people. He is pledged to care for you, and to protect you; and you are not to think of yourselves as your own, but as belonging to Christ. You are to take His words and utter them in the ears of the people, whether they will bear or whether they will forbear.

The preacher is represented as a watchman: "I have made thee a watchman unto Zion," said the Lord to Ezekiel. The watchman guards the city. The lives of the people are in his hands. His post is one of infinite moment. His whole office is to watch against enemies, against dangers. All this requires a firm purpose, a sleepless eye. Often on the ocean I have gone

to the prow of the vessel and looked out into the darkness of night. I have found the watchman not one moment from his post, his eye gazing far over the sea, where he might discern at the greatest distance and at the earliest moment any cause of possible danger. The lives of the crew and passengers were in his hands. The mist might come down heavily, the wind might blow furiously, the storm rage incessantly; but still on and ever the watchman looks out in the one direction. The whales may sport in multitudes around the vessel, the whole sea behind him be in a phosphorescent glow. His own great object is not to care for these things, but to *look ahead!* So you are watchmen. You are on the ship. The vessel may be running toward shore; there may be breakers ahead. You are to sound the alarm. False teachers may be surrounding you. The literature of the day may be corrupt. You will find infidel ideas among the people. The youth may be in danger of being ensnared and led astray. You are God's commissioned watchmen to guard them from danger. This very naturally leads us to think of the ministry as a work. It *is so*—in all its forms, from beginning to end, from youth to age. He that desireth the office of bishop desireth a good work. Jesus said to His disciples: “Work while it is day.” Paul and Barnabas were separated for the work whereunto they were called. We are workers together with God. This work is sometimes compared to a vineyard, in which the minister has to bear the burden and the heat of the day. St. Paul directs Timothy to be a worker. He says: “Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the Word and doctrine. And the labourer is worthy of his hire.”

Christ says: “Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest that He send labourers into the harvest.” No labour is heavier than that of the harvest-field, especially as it was performed in the olden time. Some of us, who are older, remember the severity of the labour; how we bent over and drew in with our sickle the leaning grain, in the rays of the hot sun. The field was large; the grain was cut handful by handful; and

the reapers at night came home only to get their rest for the next day.

Such is your work. "Say not ye, 'There are four months and then cometh the harvest.' 'The field is white already for the harvest, and you are the reapers.'" The grain is ripe and ready to perish. "He that reapeth receiveth wages." Some of the grain is falling, and a plaintive voice is on the breeze: "The harvest is past; the summer is ended; and we are not saved."

If you ever look upon the ministry as a life of ease, either abandon the thought at once, or abandon the ministry. It is a busy hive, with no room for drones. There is work in the pulpit, and out of the pulpit; work in the study, and out of the study; work in public, and in private. Of the early disciples it is said: "Daily, in the temple and from house to house, they ceased not to preach." St. Augustine says: "Nothing in this life is more difficult, laborious, and wearing, than the life of a presbyter." Luther says: "The labours of the ministry exhaust the very marrow from the bones, and hasten forward old age and death." Of the man who hid his talent it is said: "Thou wicked and slothful servant." Slothfulness is represented as the height of wickedness. Men cannot afford to take ease in other callings. They must bear the heat of the day, and take their share in the storm. And the minister *must not, dare not* rest; nor will there be ever invented moral mowing-machines to take the place of the old-fashioned sickle of the Gospel.

The minister not only *reaps*, but he *serves*. The word minister signifies servant. It once had not the dignity which to-day is attached to it. St. Paul calls himself a "servant of the Lord Jesus" and a slave. When he alludes to his preaching he says: "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Christ's sake." Christ sets the example by girding Himself and by washing His disciples' feet. He arrayed Himself in the garb of a servant. "He riseth from supper, and laid aside His garments, and took a towel and girded *Himself*. After that He poured water in a basin, and began to

wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel where-with He was girded." And it is added : " Ye call me Master and Lord ; and ye say well, for so I am. Verily, verily I say unto you, the servant is not greater than his Lord ; neither is he that is sent greater than He that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

We cannot mistake such a lesson as this. Our work is a service. The poorest and the wickedest have claims upon us. We are also informed that the way to true greatness is through service. " He that would be greatest amongst you, let him be the servant of all." We have also the example of Christ in His service to humanity. He said : " The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." We find Him always doing good. He comforted the sorrowing ; He poured eyesight on the blind, opened deaf ears, raised the sick, and relieved every possible affliction. He passed by no form of degradation, no loathsome disease. He touched the poor outcast leper and made him clean.

What a busy service did Christ lead !

On foot He travelled over the hills and valleys of Palestine. He preached in the temples and synagogues, and on the mountain sides, and by the shores of the sea, to congregations and single individuals. He taught multitudes by day, and spent part of the night on the mountain side in prayer. Unaccompanied by His disciples, He walked until weary. He sat down at the Well of Jacob, and in His weariness spake those words of life that still ring through the world. That sublime utterance : " God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth," is still ringing through the world.

He was never too weary to do good. The service we owe is first one of body, soul, and spirit, to God, which the apostle declares to be a reasonable service—consecrated to God, devoted entirely to Him as a sacrifice slain, yet alive. Then we owe a service to humanity. As Christ gave Himself to the service of the world, so He dedicates all who are consecrated to Him to like service. That service is teaching the children ; comforting the sorrowing ; relieving the poor and the wretched ; following the

wanderer ; reclaiming the prodigal ; bringing home the outcast ; lifting up the down-trodden ; visiting the prisoner ; substituting smiles for frowns, blessings for curses. It is to purify, elevate, and ennable society everywhere. There is not a human being within the sphere of his influence to whom he is not a debtor. St. Peter says : “ As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” The steward who embezzles for himself money entrusted to his care is no more guilty than the minister who receiving the gifts of grace for all around him fails to bestow these gifts upon those for whom they were destined. You are not to teach men or preach to them because they are desirous of being taught and preached to. You must teach them because God has given you gifts to bestow upon them. He has given you His truth, and sent you to save them. You are never to turn away from any man because he insults, misrepresents, or maltreats you. The worse the man is, the more imperative is your duty to try and save him. The nearer he is to ruin, the more intense should be your effort to rescue him. Christ stooped from Heaven to serve him, and the minister must stoop to rescue the lowest of the low. So, as the good householder, you are to bring out your treasures, things new and old, to offer a wedding garment to every guest who shall sit down at table with the Master.

The Church of God is represented in the figure as a temple. We are the builders. The foundation is composed of prophets and apostles. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself is the chief corner stone.

Slowly, yet surely, the edifice rises. Member after member is joined into the rising structure. Some of the materials which are placed on the building are as gold, silver, and precious stones, beautiful, polished, and Christlike ; but, in our haste and in our indolence, we are liable to introduce others, like wood, hay, and stubble. They will not stand the day of God’s examination. The great Architect will reject and cast them away, and our labour is lost. We ourselves have each a part in the building of that grand edifice, which shall be tried as by fire. You are

shepherds, sent by the Lord Jesus Christ to watch over the flock He has purchased by His blood. You are to rescue and bring back every wandering sheep. You are soldiers in the army of Jesus Christ marshalled under the Captain of our salvation. The enemy is around us. The contest thickens. You are commanded to go forward. Where the battle wages hottest, there is the post of honour. Let the arms be ready, that the word of command may be obeyed. And yet how prone are we to lag behind, and to wish for ourselves safety and ease!

Thirdly. The transcendent greatness of the ministry is seen in *the results to be achieved.* It is a grand work, which reaches from eternity to eternity. It glances over all matter and treats of angels and of God. The professor in college, the lecturer in the university, are well satisfied when they have imparted the truth clearly, and when their students comprehend it. But at that point the teaching of the ministry is but begun. The raw recruit in the army understands the word of command. He knows what is to be done, but fails to perform it correctly and gracefully. The young lady at her piano knows the notes and understands the keys of her instrument, perceives what keys ought to be touched; yet the untrained fingers fail to bring out the music. The minister may teach his audience the doctrine of righteousness; he may explain its nature and mode; but still his work is but begun. He is not only to teach his audience how to repent, but to bring them to repentance. He is not to teach merely the nature of prayer, but to bring his congregation to prayer. He is not merely to present the cross of Christ, but to lead people to His feet. He is not merely to tell of the forgiveness of sin and the conscious joy of redeeming love, but to bring his sympathizing hearers into the full enjoyment of these glorious blessings. How transcendently glorious, yet how difficult, the work of the preacher! He appeals to an audience of one hundred souls, of every possible grade. Some are Christians of partial maturity; some are babes in Christ; some are thoughtful inquirers; some are unredeemed sinners and hardened sceptics; some professed infidels, yet with pure moral lives; others profane and lawless. To that assembly he presents the

Lord Jesus Christ. He holds up before them the blessed Saviour as though He were present before them. He exhibits Him in His majesty, in His condescension, in His power, in His passion, in His omnipotence, in His boundlessness of love. He cries: "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world! Look unto Him, all ye nations of the earth, and be saved." As he holds this divine Saviour before their eyes, his character bears witness to his power. They see and feel, repent, and believe. The heart which at first says: "Depth of mercy, can there be mercy still reserved for me?" after looking at this holy vision and feeling its glories, cries out exultingly: "God is love, I know, I feel; Jesus weeps and loves me still"; and then come to him the words of the Master: "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." Your work, young gentlemen, is to take this vast assembly of multitudinous characters, circumstances, and habits, and bring them into the image of Christ; to make these weak, imperfect, sinful beings into the likeness of the blessed Saviour. Your work is well expressed in the language of the apostles: "We preach, warning every man and teaching every man, in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

What a sublime picture is here presented of making every man to stand in the stature of Christ! Not faintly nor partially; but in the fullness of Christ. This is the unity of Christianity. The great purpose of gathering together all things in Christ, both in Heaven and on earth, even in Him. The transformation is a glorious one; for we, too, with open face are to behold as in a glass; we, too, are to be changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of God. This exhibition of Christ before our eyes, presented so that all men may see and repent, believe and enjoy, is Christian preaching. It is by the Word of God, presented by one divinely commissioned, accompanied by the power of the Holy Spirit, that men are transformed from sinners to saints. Can this be done? It was done by the apostles. We

have the same word ; we are men of like passions ; we have the same accompanying Spirit. Men need the same transformation as the block of marble from which the beautiful image is to be freed by the tool of the sculptor. They are like wild trees, whose useless branches are to be pruned and superfluous twigs cut off. God has given to us an instrument. "The word is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." "For as the rain cometh down and the snow from Heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my Word be that goeth forth out of my mouth." No wonder that the prophet, in exultation at the glories of it, exclaimed : " For we shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace. The mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands."

What an exhibition of the renewing power of the Gospel ! The thorns and thistles which have cursed the earth shall be removed, the Gospel of truth shall fill the whole earth. Then, indeed, will there be a new Heaven and a new earth. Until that time we must preach on. Nor must we be diverted from our work by any suggestions that society cannot be reformed or that the Lord Jesus will come visibly to cut off the wicked and to reign as temporal king. I have respect for some men that teach the doctrine ; but none for the doctrine itself. If analyzed, it is a lack of faith in the power of God's words ; it is a spirit of indolence which is unwilling to face the long ages of toil and sacrifice ; or it is a spirit of vengeance, that calls for fire to come down from Heaven. They think it easier to kill men than to convert them.

Fourthly.—This preaching is to be a perpetual agency. Other systems may change, other plans may fall ; but this *never*. It is the sovereign decree of Almighty God that by preaching the Gospel of His Son men shall be saved. To the Jew His preaching was a stumbling-block. It took from him all his beloved cere-

monial. The temple was no longer the exclusively holy place; Jerusalem was no longer to be the central home of God's people; the whole earth was to be a worshipping temple: walls and partitions were to be broken down; all races were to be brought on one common platform, all humanity to become kings and priests under God. It was to him a stumbling-block; but to the Greek, the man devoted to philosophy and to science, it was foolishness. To the Greek the glorious record of his nation had been for centuries its orators, its painters, its historians, its sculptors, and its warriors. To him his nation was the centre of knowledge and civilization; Athens, the concentration of the mental power of the world, ruled by learning more than by arms. The highest talent of humanity was there represented. The pencil of Apelles, the chisel of Praxiteles, the oratory of Demosthenes, the academic teachings of Plato, the practical philosophy of Socrates, the keen logic of Aristotle, the histories of Herodotus and Thucydides, the poetry of Euripides and Homer, the statesmanship of Pericles, and the military talent of Miltiades were the glory of the nation. These were the marks of civilization and the indices of their glory.

To be told that all this was insignificant, and that the only way to triumph over passions and impulses was to seek favour with God; that true grandeur was to come by telling the story of a crucified Saviour, a Jew by birth, who said He was the son of man, and yet the Son of God; pure and spotless in His life, yet crucified between thieves; buried and guarded by Roman soldiers, yet arose the third day; lived on earth for a time, and then ascended to glory—when told that by these truths all history was to be changed, and belief in Him made of more importance than the highest culture and civilization, can we wonder that they said, “It is foolishness”?

Men of science say so to-day; yet by that preaching which they called foolishness it is God's eternal and immutable purpose to save them which believe. It has already saved in the past; it is saving still. It has been the light of our civilization; its beams are scattered across the world. Some say that society is changed, that the pulpit has lost its power, and that men are no

longer attracted there. Now and then a preacher arises who attracts the multitude and rivets their attention. Such men are given to us to show the possibilities of the pulpit, and to point to the time when, instead of being disgraced, it shall accomplish grander results. Some tell us that the press has superseded the pulpit ; that men need no longer to be hearers, because they are readers. The Bible is in their hands ; if they need any explanations, they have the works of the great commentators. Why listen to sermons of men of little experience and only average culture ? But they forget the *human element*, the power of man over his fellow-men, the force derived from experience, the practical accompanying the ideal. True preaching, as I have said, is not merely the delivery of the message ; but the delivery of the message by men who profess to have felt its power and testified to its truth in their own experience.

The preacher not only proclaims the truth ; he stands as a personal witness to its power. What political party would go into an exciting canvass relying merely on articles from the press. The press is a valuable auxiliary. It reports the strongest thought of the eloquent theorist. But every party must have conventions, its evening meetings, stump speakers. Without these it fails. What would the temperance reformation be without speakers who themselves have been reformed ? What would Murphy's influence be through the press alone ? It is the man who was a drunkard, reduced to wretchedness, who was in jail, when the work found him and elevated him, that the crowd go to hear. When that man stands before an audience and tells the story of his fall, his sorrow, his wretchedness, his repentance and reformation, and triumph over appetite, the hearts of the people are stirred, and many are moved to join the good cause. Who has not read the lectures of Gough ? And yet, though he tells the same stories over and over, the largest auditoriums are crowded almost to overflowing to hear him.

Wendell Phillips has been for thirty years hunting the lost arts. The synopsis of his lectures has been before the public again and again ; yet people hasten and crowd to hear him.

Though Shakespeare's works are found in almost every library, still the author of the dramas draws theatres crowded for sometimes a hundred nights in succession. It is the *man* who impersonates the *ideas* that they wish to see and hear. Some things never grow old. The songs our mothers sung to us in childhood are still the sweetest music in our ears. "Now I lay me down to sleep," was the evening prayer of Quincy Adams when he sat in the presidential chair.

The very men who say the pulpit is a failure, and declare it to be superseded, are themselves unwilling to trust to the press alone. The notorious Ingersoll, who denounces Christianity and denies the being of God, is unwilling to trust to his writings, but eagerly mounts the platform, and thus steals the livery of Heaven to serve the Devil in. Erasmus says: "The Devil preached." He preached to Eve and seduced the human race. Christian preaching shall never fail. The great Commander issued His orders of marching centuries ago. He never changes His plans, and will not be defeated. His order was, "Go preach!" and this stands good until He comes again. Into such an illustrious company does the young preacher enter. Isaiah exclaimed: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings." The long line of preachers extends in unbroken succession from Christ Himself to the present hour. A *line* did I say? More than a line. A pyramid, of which He is the basis, and which year by year rises in altitude and widens in its base; and will rise and will widen until it covers all lands, and the preacher shall be seen and heard of every child of Adam on the globe. It is an unbroken succession not by the ordinances of man, nor by the needs of man, nor by the will of man; but by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is a holy fellowship, a glorious association. They were all men of like passions with us. Some have, indeed, entered the ministry without the divine call, others have been overborne by passion; some concerning the faith have been shipwrecked. Peter denied his master, Judas betrayed Him. Men have disgraced themselves and brought reproach upon the office; but it still lives, strengthened because Christ lives, and is deter-

mined that it shall so stand, while He walks among the skies and holds the stars in His right hand.

Lastly. It is of moment to think of your responsibility. You enter this holy brotherhood. You take upon yourselves holy vows. You perform sacred functions. If you faithfully proclaim your Saviour; if you skilfully handle the two-edged sword; if you wisely pierce between sinners and saints; if you earnestly represent the Lord Jesus Christ in all His beauty; if you live for this one work alone; if you study, pray, preach, and strive to improve men as Christ did, *then* your reward will be glorious, and the promise, "Thou shalt shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever," shall be yours. Star may differ from star in glory. All shall be radiant with the light of Jesus.

But should you handle the Word of God deceitfully; should you, as ambassadors, forget God's message, and tell your own words; should you woo the smiles of the people and court their favour, and neglect the preaching which God bids you preach; should you, as stewards, embezzle the gifts which God gives you for others; should you, as builders, put in wood, and hay, and stubble; should you, as soldiers, flee from the field in the day of battle; should you, as trumpeters, give an uncertain sound, and the walls, hence, go down to ruin, who can measure the awful responsibility? I shudder when I think of what is in the range of possibility—the terrible inquisition when God says: "Where is thy brother? His blood crieth to me from the ground!" Better would it have been never to have been born; better would it have been if a millstone had been hung about your necks and you had been cast into the midst of the sea; better that rocks and mountains might fall upon you and hide you from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, though we thus speak.

II.

THE CALL TO THE MINISTRY.

Gentlemen :—The subject which next demands our attention is the *personelle* of the ministry, or *who* should enter the sacred office. Two points are worthy of special consideration : First, do the Scriptures teach that there is a special call to the ministry ? Secondly, if so, by what evidence may a young man be assured that he is so called ? The reasonableness of the divine call may be inferred from the structure of the Church and the titles given to it. It is the body of Christ—Himself being the glorious head. As the brain directs the human frame, so does Christ the Church. All its plans are from Him. The Church is represented as a country over which Christ reigns. Though invisible, He inspires its movements and has promised to be present with its ministers. They are His agents, His ambassadors ; they stand in His stead. Every earthly government selects the ambassadors which it sends. It would be an offence against its majesty if one not selected by itself should appear as its representative. So we may well suppose that Christ selects His own ministers, whom He sends forth to proclaim His message and to promote the interests of His kingdom. The Church is a vast army ; the Captain of our Salvation directs its movements. It is His prerogative to select the officers who are to marshal this army, and to appoint them to their places, that the great plans of the campaign may be carried out successfully. He is the great Shepherd of the sheep. He owns the flock for which He gave His life. It is His right to appoint pastors after His own heart to feed the flock.

Another indication is found in the Jewish dispensation. God selected the tribe of Levi, the family of Aaron, to minister before Him. From time to time He raised up prophets as teachers,

judges, and leaders of the people, selected at His own pleasure. So might we well expect that in the Christian dispensation the teachers should be selected by Himself. We are not left, however, to mere conjecture or reason in a matter so important. The example of Christ is authoritative. For His ministers He selected a few disciples, and enjoined them to follow Him. After their number had increased, He chose twelve by name for the special office. Subsequently He selected seventy, whom He set apart, and whom He sent forth to go before Him into every city to preach and do wonderful works in His name. After His resurrection He commanded His disciples to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature, enjoining upon them, at the same time, to tarry in Jerusalem until they were endowed with power from on high. After His ascension, Matthias was selected by lot to fill the place of Judas, after prayer had been offered that God would show whom He had chosen. St. Paul was also in a miraculous manner called to the work of the ministry. It is remarkable how frequently he refers to the fact of his calling. Many of the epistles begin with the declaration that he is an apostle "*called of God*," or "*commanded by God*," or "*by the will of God*." He indicates, also, the divine selection of Timothy when he says: "*Stir up the gift of God which is in thee.*" After the ascension of Christ, we find a difference in the *mode* of the call. He selected His twelve disciples, and when He set apart seventy He spoke to each one audibly. He made the selection visibly and publicly, that all might know and recognize their authority. So when Paul was added to the apostles, though Christ had ascended to Heaven, yet He appeared to him near Damascus, took the persecutor captive, and appointed him to the work of this ministry. But the period of this direct and audible call passed away. Neither by voice from Heaven, nor by the light of Divine glory, nor by any other external agency was it directly given. It came, however, none the less from Christ. He ascended up on high, and received gifts for men, and gave them unto men; and it is added, "*He gave some apostles, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the*

edifying of the body of Christ." Thus the selection of those given to the church was in the hands of its great Head, who had sat down on the righthand of God until His enemies be made His foot-stool. If any change were made in the economy of the Church in this respect, it is incumbent upon those who allege the change to produce the authority; but no such authority can be found.

The true minister in the present, as in the apostolic age, is called by the Lord Jesus to his sacred office. No man taketh this honour upon himself; but he who is called by God, as was Aaron. Such were the teachings of the ancient Church. St. Chrysostom says: "No man, nor angel, nor archangel, nor created power, but the Paraclete Himself, had instituted this office, and chosen beings yet living in the flesh to fulfil the ministry of angels. Such also have been the teachings of the Church in its leading branches down to the present time. In several of these the candidate for the ministry is required to say that he believes he is "moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon him the work of the ministry."

In what, then, does this divine call consist, or how is a young man to be perfectly sure that he is called by God? This question is of immense moment to every young minister. Without this assurance, in moments of darkness and times of despondency he will be assailed by doubts. He will question whether he was ever called to preach. He will be led to inquire whether it is not his duty to abandon the ministry. The more strictly conscientious he is, the deeper will be his agonies and the greater his perplexities. But if he doubts he is shorn of much of his power. The doubter never accomplishes much. The double-minded man is unstable in all his ways. The man of deep convictions, even though he occasionally errs, is the man of power. Thomas, who, I suppose, seldom made a mistake, is never heard of except in asking questions or expressing doubt. And so far as the New Testament history goes in the early triumphant spread of the Gospel he is never mentioned; while Peter, confident even to boldness and recklessness, receives the keys of Heaven, to open its doors to the Gentile world.

The first evidence of the Divine call is in the consciousness of the individual. It is a persuasion, which, slight as it may seem at first, deepens into an intense conviction that he is called of God to preach the Gospel. There is not quite so much unanimity among writers or churches as to the mode of this call as to the fact of the call itself. Some writers, of distinguished talent and high position, distinguish between what they term the *ordinary* and the *extraordinary* call.

In the *ordinary* call they teach that the young man arrives at the conviction that he should preach from the consideration of his qualifications, mental tendencies, and surrounding circumstances; that the same influences which lead him to enter the ministry would, with some changes, lead him to enter the profession of medicine or the law, or engage in some special pursuit. He simply follows the indications of Providence manifested in his own nature or in the world around about him. These are found in his physical capacity, intellectual power, fondness for study, readiness of utterance, benevolent tendency, and religious life. He beholds around him a world lying in wickedness. Men are going astray. He has felt in his own heart the love of God, with an accompanying desire to do good, to do all the good he can; and looks upon the work of the ministry as a work of benevolence and love. He believes he could be useful in teaching the ignorant and in elevating the aspirations of the young; in holding the attention of congregations and in persuading them to believe the Word of the Lord. He reasons within himself, and says that as a minister he thinks he could do more good than as a physician; that he feels an aversion to attending the sick, and almost a horror of surgical operations, and doubts whether he could bear the frequent loss of sleep, the intense strain and anxiety connected with the profession, and whether he could face the dangers of the terrible epidemics. He has some scruples with reference to the law. He has a vague idea that he could scarcely keep a good conscience amid the solicitations of clients and the bribes of thieves. He often doubts whether he is quite fitted for the quick *repartee* and controversies which so often occur; whether he could bear the respo-

sibility of having the life of a man dependent on the success with which he may be able to plead the case before the jury. So he selects the ministry, because he sincerely believes that thereby he can best promote his own happiness and the welfare of humanity. This, I believe, is a fair statement of the views held by those who regard the selection of the ministry as determined *merely* by the questions of qualifications and adaptation.

I have purposely omitted the influence of unworthy motives, such as the consideration of the ministry affording a comfortable livelihood, seeking to be put into the priestly office for a piece of bread; the motives arising from the pulpit being a forum where eloquence can be displayed and elocutionary power exhibited, or applause gained, or the consideration of the association of the minister being with that class of the community which is most intelligent, tasteful, and enterprising. Even these last motives may properly be considered in selecting mere secular employment and profession. By providential indications one may be fully satisfied that it is best to enter a certain employment, and that in it the approbation of God will rest upon him; yet this is not what I think the Scriptures teach by the *Divine call*. Paul did not enter the ministry because he had been schooled in Cilicia, or brought up by Gamaliel, or on account of superior powers of logic, or because he preferred it to some other occupation. He preached because he had received from Christ authority and command to preach the Gospel.

He was directly sent as Jesus had said: "As the Father hath sent me, so also send I you." So was it with all the Apostles. I do not deny that the motives named may be worthy of consideration in their proper place. They may be regarded as coincident with, confirmatory to, the higher call. But I believe the true call of the minister is a supernatural one, not embraced in this description of the ordinary call. The *extraordinary* call of such writers is what I deem the *true* call to the ministry. It does not consist in any audible voice, any vision or dream, or any extraordinary external circumstances. The message which God sends is spiritual, like the still, small voice. It influences the

inner nature, and is extraordinary only in that it is a special divine communication.

In its lightest form it is a persuasion that he who receives it *ought* to preach the Gospel. In its strongest form it is that God requires him to do this at the peril of his salvation. Even in its faintest form there is this distinction between the call to the ministry and the choice of other professions: The young man may *wish* to be a physician; he may *desire* to enter the army; he *would like* to be a farmer; but he feels he *ought* to be a minister; and it is this feeling of "*ought*" and obligation which in its feeblest form indicates the divine call. It is not in the aptitude, taste, or desire, but in the *conscience*, that its root is found. It is God's voice to the man's conscience, saying: "You *ought* to preach." In cases where children have been educated to the ministry, where the heart has early submitted to the divine influence, and where associations and studies have been directed to this one end, it may oftentimes be difficult to distinguish between the purpose or expectation and the feeling of duty. The feeling becomes strongest when there is a conflict of motives; but in the depraved human heart the conflict will surely rise. The holiness connected with the idea of preaching is not in harmony with man's native tendency, and often in those who are religious from childhood the strength of that native tendency will sooner or later be manifested. The conviction that one *ought* to preach may arise prior to conversion. Especially is this the case when a young man has been blessed with religious education and has been subjected to deep religious impressions, though he has not fully yielded his heart to God. A few instances I have known where thoughtful, talented, and generally conscientious young men have stumbled at this point; for they feared to submit themselves wholly to the divine will, lest it might be their duty to preach the Gospel!

But never are such persons converted until they are willing to be and to do whatever God may require. Generally, however, the impression that one is called to the ministry arises after conversion. Sometimes it comes in the very moment of conversion, and with the peace that calms the troubled spirit.

there is a yearning to bring the world to the feet of Jesus. Usually this conviction arises in the early stages of religious life, and especially when the young Christian begins to speak and pray in the social meetings. Then a greater work rises before him. He feels it to be his duty to persuade sinners to be reconciled to God. In some cases this impression gradually unfolds itself, like the dawning of the morning before the rising sun. In other cases it comes almost with the suddenness and dazzling power of the lightning's flash.

Admitting the existence of this conviction, how is it known to be of divine origin? Conscience tells us that the persuasion is there; but how can we know whence it comes? I think there is nothing unphilosophical in referring it to a pure spiritual source—even to God Himself. In this respect it resembles the work of conversion. Peace springs up in the heart; but whence that peace comes consciousness alone cannot tell. Yet the true Christian at once and correctly ascribes it to a divine source. There is a school of philosophy, represented by Coleridge, which admits the existence of these impressions on the human mind, and that they come from the divine source; but it denies that any man can affirm that the impression he has is from God. They say we cannot have any knowledge of our impressions, because they are known to us only through consciousness. This consciousness, being only a knowledge of our internal states, cannot give us any information of their origin. And, hence, while it is admitted that the Christian is born of God, it is denied that he can have any knowledge of it except by way of inference from his mental states. The same reason will apply to the doctrine of the ministerial call—*i. e.*, the young man may be truly called of God; but it is impossible for him to know it except by way of inference from surrounding indications. This philosophy I believe to be radically defective. I have no time to enter into metaphysical discussions. This lectureship is not the place for it. Yet I believe that the same mental constitution which necessitates us to refer some internal impressions to external, visible, material objects, leads us with equal force and certainty to refer other impressions to internal, invisible, and spiritual sources.

You well know, young gentlemen, that, strictly speaking, we know nothing of the material world. We have sensations or impressions within us. We know them only by consciousness. But, by a law of our nature antecedent to quicker and stronger reasoning, we refer these impressions to external sources ; and in common life no man doubts that he sees, hears, and touches the material world. It is only the philosopher who reasons and doubts. But of the impressions within us there are some we cannot refer to visible matter. They either spring up within us or from some law of our being, or they come to us from some invisible source ; and yet, I repeat, there is nothing more unphilosophical in referring an impression which is not of ourselves to a spiritual than to a material origin. The fact that men do refer certain mental impressions to an invisible origin is the foundation of all religious faith. It gives the conviction of the unseen, and though that unseen may be unknown, fancy paints it in its own colours. Wild have been the imaginations of ghosts and demons in various forms. The reference to external nature is verified by our senses. The senses give corroborative and cumulative certainty until absolute certainty is produced. The impressions of the invisible are corroborated and confirmed by revelation. And yet we find there is an invisible world of spirits and angels. We find that in our creation God breathed upon us, and we became living souls ; and that in the new dispensation Christ breathed upon His disciples, and they received the Holy Ghost, and became new creatures. Hence, we learn, first the possibility of the blessed Saviour breathing upon our hearts and creating impressions within us. We learn, further, that He is the source of the pure and the holy ; that everything good and perfect comes from above. By our own consciousness we know that what arises within us of ourselves is tainted, and many times, impure. When these impressions of purity and holiness and spiritual grandeur fill our hearts, we have the right to believe that these come from God. Again, the Word of God assures us that they do so come ; for it tells us that the fruit of the Spirit is peace, and love, and joy, with other graces. But there is more than this. He gives

us His Spirit that we may *know* the things freely given to us of God. It is said, in the story of the creation, when the earth was without form and void, the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, and the first great act in that movement was the creation of light. So, when the Spirit of God moves upon the darkness and emptiness of the human soul, its greatest fiat is, "Let there be light." The man whose eyes Jesus opened gazed first upon His heavenly countenance. So the light of grace on the human soul leads it directly to God, and its first utterance is: "Abba! Father." As the young convert has assurances, drawn by his own spirit from the peace and love within him, he has also that deeper influence which seems to radiate his soul, and makes him feel that the Spirit of God bears witness with his spirit that he is a child of God. So in this call to the ministry there is not only an impression of duty to preach, but it is accompanied by intense love to God—intense yearning for the souls of men, and for the eradication of all evil from the earth. It must come from a pure and spiritual source. But over and above that, there is such a sweet tenderness, so much of heavenly influence, so much of divine light, that one feels assured that it is of God.

I must add, however, that no impression can be any rule of conduct as to what is the word of God. To follow impression beyond that is simply fanaticism. Admitting, however, that this knowledge is not absolute, but merely and strongly presumptive, we are commanded to try by *experience* whether they be of God, and we have tests by which that trial can be made. The first is that this call to the ministry comes to one who has felt the breathing of the Spirit in his regeneration. He recognizes the same Spirit now. Its drawings have the same tenderness; its influences have the same love; its whispers have the same accent. The deeper the personal consecration, the nearer his soul is drawn toward God, the more earnest the yearning to save the world. The persuasion grows stronger. When worldly influences and associations prevail, its whispers are more faint. Again, it cannot come from our own suggestion. We are fond of mirthfulness, gaiety, amusement, wealth, honour, fame. We

love the associations and approbations of the world. The pulpit calls us away from these. Serious duties, anxious cares, constant labour, comparative poverty, occupy their place. Many of the wise men of the world, whose approval we love, say preaching is foolishness; and in the immense throng who rush through life rashly and hastily there are some who come to turn us from the pulpit. The suggestion does not come from the Evil One. It is yearning to overcome the kingdom of darkness. Our Saviour says: "If Satan be divided against himself, how can his kingdom stand?" "But if I do all this by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God is come unto you."

Another test is the fact that this desire is usually in direct antagonism to natural inclination and previous purpose. The young man not only does not desire to preach, but he is *unwilling*. He has already formed plans for other professions of business. His heart was set on some favourite pursuit, when he was interfered with by this call. It seems to take from him all his bright visions of fame and wealth and glory. It not only interferes with his own plans, but oftentimes with those of his parents and friends. They are deeply grieved, so that even the father threatens to disinherit and disown him. Yet in the midst of all these difficulties the persuasion grows stronger that he must preach the Gospel. Sometimes it becomes so intense that it is seldom from his mind. In the hours of his solitude, in his lonely walks, he will often wring his hands and say: "Woe is me, if I preach not the Gospel." He feels that he must preach, at the peril of his soul's salvation. In addition to all this, difficulties will frequently arise almost in the form of angels of light. The ministry is so holy, so exalted, and he is so imperfect and has so many infirmities, he must not defile it. He says, with Isaiah: "I am a man of unclean lips." He thinks of his youth and inexperience, and says, with Jeremiah: "Behold! I cannot speak, for I am a child." He fears he shall not be able to speak the Gospel acceptably, and says, with Moses: "I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue." Such views naturally deter him; but the remedy is Divine grace and power. If it be needed, indeed, a seraph will fly with a live

coal from the altar to touch his lips. God will give him friends and associates that shall enable him to stand before Pharaoh. Sometimes, however, the difficulty lies in his relation to others. His parents are old, and they need, as he fancies, to have their son at home. He says: "Suffer me first to bury my father." He has bought a yoke of oxen, he has entered a profession, he wishes first to devote himself to the acquisition of wealth, or he has married a wife, and, therefore, he cannot come. Yet, whatever may be the difficulties, whatever may be the embarrassments, they are all known to Him that makes the call. Jesus says: "Let the dead bury their dead. Follow thou me." If the heart be obedient, the way will be opened. Parental happiness will be secured, business will be disposed of, and the opposing wife may be converted. If I may make a slight digression here, however, and whisper a word confidentially, I would say that a young man who sees before him even the possibility of God's calling him to the ministry would do well not to marry a wife until he has entered upon his ministerial work. Above all, as a student, he should postpone the study of that department of science for a post-graduate course. To Adam, sole occupant of Eden, as he was, God brought every animal to be named; and in early days names were derived from qualities. Adam, as a bachelor, had finished his studies, before the beautiful and attractive Eve was brought to his sight. It is sad to say, yet extended observation warrants me in saying, that many a young man has dwarfed himself and limited his usefulness by too early and hasty a marriage.

If, then, a young man feels himself called to the ministry by divine persuasion, what shall he do? I answer: Let him read and prepare himself thoroughly for the work of the ministry. Let him work in his sphere for his Master's cause. If he be a student, let him seek to influence his unconverted associates. If he be at home, let him lead his brothers and sisters and his most intimate friends to Christ. If he finds a Nathaniel, let him, like Philip, tell him of Jesus, and say: "Come and see." Let him remember that it is not his place to wait for some great work.

The fancy of some day being some great thing is a fearful illusion. To do great things, we must learn to do little things well. No man is fit to be the commanding general of an army who has not himself been drilled as soldier. No man can obtain great power as a minister until he has met a brother's objection, seen a brother's difficulty, learned a brother's temptation, and witnessed how the Word of God has delivered a brother's soul. Congregations are made up of individuals. Man by man, heart by heart, is the conquest won ; and the young man is just prepared for the ministry who learns how to deal with individual cases of sin or sorrow, of guilt or despondency.

Shall he tell his friends that he is called to the ministry ? He need not. Shall he apply to the church to be permitted to preach ? Shall he seek to get into some pulpit and preach on some public occasion ? By no means. The man who is anxious to go is never sent. If he has little conception of the responsibility of the ministry, if he is so little acquainted with himself that he fancies himself called to the work, it is such a sign of mental and moral disqualification as to unfit him for the ministry. The man truly called has no need to publish it. So long as God speaks to him privately, let him answer privately : "Lord, here I am. Send me."

The second evidence of the ministerial call is the voice of the church. God has established correspondences throughout Nature. There is the eye for sight, and the light visible to us to correspond. There is the ear to hear, and the vibrating body and the undulating air. So the great Head of the Church, who calls the young man to preach, leads the church to recognize that call. The influence of the Lord thrills from the voice, sparkles from the eye, radiates from the countenance, and signals to us in the earnest restlessness of his soul. The young man may fancy the matter a secret with himself, and hope it shall never be known ; yet, as he walks the street, some ministerial brother or some aged servant of God will lay an affectionate hand on his shoulder and say : "Has not God given you a greater work to do ?" Scarcely has the prayer-meeting ended when some servant of God—possibly some elect old lady—will

say to him : “ Has not God called you to preach ? ” Sometimes these questions come so suddenly, and so unexpectedly, and so unlooked for, that the soul calls out : “ Hast thou found me, O mine enemy ? ” That which is discovered by one soon becomes known, manifest to all, and the church, in whatever way it may operate, opens for him the doorway leading into the ministry. It is the call of the church added to the conscious call that greatly strengthens the conviction of duty.

Many Scripture instances show us the beautiful correspondence of these voices. God called Bezaleel and Aholiab to work on the tabernacle, and filled them with the spirit of wisdom. Yet they were not authorized to commence the work until God informed Moses that He called them. Joshua was called by the Holy Spirit to lead Israel ; and the call was also revealed to Moses, and he laid his hands upon him. When God’s voice reached Samuel, it was a new experience. He thought Eli called him ; and so the second and the third time he arose and came to Eli, who then perceived it was the Lord, and told Samuel to say : “ Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth.” Through Eli’s voice Samuel learned God’s call, and he doubted never afterwards. God called Saul, and sent Samuel to anoint him, when he would have hidden himself among the people. He called David, and Samuel poured the anointing oil on his head. The disciples were called originally audibly and visibly by Christ, the Head of the Church. Paul received his message not only from the lips of Jesus, but also from Ananias. Timothy received the gift of God and the call from the laying on of hands. There is not an instance in Holy Writ where a true man was ever anxious to bear the divine message. He always shrank from it, hesitated, and trembled. Thus did Moses ; thus did the prophets. Jonah fled, and would not go to Nineveh until after he had been well waled ! I have known young men to leave their neighbourhood ; their local churches ; their associations in the East. I have found them wandering on the Pacific Slope ; and scarcely had they reached their destination and engaged in social prayer, when some friendly voice said : “ Are you not a preacher, and has not God called you ? ”

When the Church recognizes a young man, he should openly

and publicly prepare himself for the work of the ministry, and, according to his opportunities, let him secure the utmost qualifications which he can acquire. Sometimes a strange intermingling of benevolence and self-esteem urges a young man onward, and he fancies the world will go down to ruin unless he springs at once to the rescue. My advice to such young men is to get thoroughly ready. If you go out into the forest to fell trees, you would not consider that lost time which you spent in sharpening your axe. Is it not remarkable that Jesus never preached a sermon until He was thirty years of age? Yet the world was going to ruin! You reply: "Yes; but that was the age when the Jewish priest held his office, and Christ conformed to the Jewish thought and practice." That is true. Yet it is no less true that the Head of the Church ordained that the priest should not officiate until he was thirty years of age. I do not say *all* should wait so long. The pressing need of the Church and good judgment may indicate the need. No precise rule as to age or qualifications is laid down in the Bible. The Church and individual must decide the thing in every case. In different churches and in different ages of the same church the standard has varied.

The early Scotch ministers had but limited training. Dr. South satirizes the Puritan preachers of his age, who, shut out of the universities, had few opportunities. The early Methodists were also obliged to get along with scanty training. If the West, when the rapid streams of emigration were pouring into it, had been compelled to wait for trained ministers, it would have become a mass of corruption and iniquity. But the times have changed, and more ministers are now knocking than can find room. God seems to say to the candidates, "Prepare to the utmost;" and to the churches, "Put only the picked men on guard." There are, then, three evidences of the minister's call: 1st. The man's own conscience; 2nd. The Church's approval and call; 3rd. The approval of God, as shown in the results of His ministry. These three all combined—the voice of conscience, the voice of the Church, and the attestation of God—then no man need doubt, and in the mouths of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.

Let me illustrate one form of this call by my own experience. Trained religiously, I reached a young man's years before making a public profession of religion. Occasionally, prior to my conversion, thoughts of the ministry sometimes flashed across my mind ; but it was only a flash. After my conversion I was earnest for the welfare of others, and wanted to promote the interests of the Church and of humanity. The conviction grew upon me that I must preach ; yet I tried to put that away, because I feared I could never succeed. I saw the greatness of the work, and the reproachful poverty connected then with the itinerant ministry. There were two special difficulties in my way. First, I had no gift of speech. My voice was poor, and in school I always shunned declamation. I firmly believed I could never make a speaker ; and so chose the profession of medicine, which I studied three years in a professional school. I think I should have resolutely rejected the idea of the ministry except that it seemed inseparably connected with my salvation. I fasted, I prayed for divine direction ; but I found no rest, until, in reading the Bible one day, I found a passage which seemed specially written for me : "Trust in the Lord with all thy heart ; lean not unto thine own understanding ; in all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths." I accepted it, and resolved to do whatever God in His providence should indicate by opening the way. I never lisped to a friend the slightest intimation of my mental agony ; but I took a more earnest part in the church services. One Sabbath I felt a strong impression that I ought to speak to the people at night in prayer-meeting, as we had no preaching. I said to myself : "How shall I ? For my friends will say I am foolish, as they know I cannot speak with interest." Especially I dreaded a certain old uncle, who had been a father to me, and superintended my education. While I was discussing this matter with myself in the afternoon, my uncle came into the room, and, after a moment's hesitation, said to me : "Don't you think you could speak to the people to-night ?" I was surprised and startled. I asked him if he thought I ought. He said : "Yes. I think you can do good." That night, for some strange reason, the house was crowded,

and I made my first religious address to a public congregation. It was not written. It was not very well premeditated. It was simply an earnest outgushing of a sincere and honest heart. My mother was a widow. I was her eldest son, and the only child remaining at home. I feared it would break her heart to leave her, and feared it would be impossible to do so. One day, after great embarrassment, I was induced to speak to my mother on the subject of my mental struggles, and tell her what I thought God required of me. I never shall forget how she turned to me with a smile and said: "My son, I have been looking for this hour ever since you were born!" She then told me how she and my dying father, who left me an infant, consecrated me to God, and prayed that, if it were His will, I might become a minister. And yet that mother had never dropped a word of intimation in my ear that she ever desired me to be a preacher. She believed so fully in the divine call that she would not bias my youthful mind with even suggestions of it in prayer.

That conversation settled my mind. Oh, what a blessing is a sainted mother! To-day I can feel her hands on my head, and I hear the intonation of her voice in prayer. I was requested shortly afterward to preach a trial sermon; but I refused. The church said that if I did not preach a trial sermon they could not tell whether I was qualified. I replied that there was no order in the discipline of our Church which directed or even permitted such a sermon. I did not desire a licence to preach; but had fully promised God to obey the order of the Church, should it license me, and I should never try to preach until I was so licensed. Well, I was licensed and entered the pulpit. By the divine agency some souls were awakened and converted. By the grace of God I have continued to this day. You perceive that I believe in the divine election of ministers. So far you can count me a Calvinist. I believe, further, a man so selected should never turn aside to any other employment while health and the approbation of the Church continue. Should health and strength give way, he should turn to other duties. Should he find he was mistaken in his calling, should he find his services were not needed, better dig coal in the mine or break stone in

the road than stand in the pulpit uncalled by God and unapproved by the Church. But, being approved and blessed, never turn aside. Let not temptations, dangers, wealth, or fame, allure you from the ministry. I have known men so called to abandon the ministry ; and I have never known one to give it up for wealth who did not either become bankrupt, or make a shipwreck of faith before he died. You may be depressed, poverty may stare you in the face, but stand as the beaten anvil to the stroke. Do your duty, and verily you will be fed. God will care for you as long as the raven has wings, and as long as a widow in the land has a handful of meal in the barrel.

Think, too, of the Early Christians, of the noble line of martyrs and their sufferings. Then yours will sink into insignificance. Think how the great Apostle was imprisoned, and scourged many times. I see him gathering his garments around his lacerated shoulders, while he whispered : “ None of these things move me.” I see him taken to the edge of the city, and stoned. And as his friends raise him up, I hear them say, “ Abandon this. They will kill you if you preach.” And yet, as soon as his breath returns, he utters : “ None of these things move me.” I see him drawn out of the water, after having been in it a day and a night, lying on the beach, the water dripping from the long black hair. And his friends say : “ He will never preach again.” But, as his pulse beats feebly, and his strength begins to return, I hear him say : “ None of these things move me.” And afterwards, when the elders of Miletus came down to meet him, and told him bonds and imprisonments awaited him, I hear him say, “ I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight ; I have finished my course ; I have kept the faith through the grace of God.”

Bonds and imprisonments did, indeed, await him. He stood before Nero ; he was condemned to go out of his dungeon to die. Through Timothy he sends the joyous message : “ Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me.” Such a grand hero was the Apostle. Living and dying, one work he did—unmoved, unmovable ; and to us he speaks, “ Follow me, as I follow Christ.”

III.

THE PERSONAL HABITS OF THE MINISTER.

“**TAKE** heed to thyself,” was the injunction of St. Paul to his beloved disciple, Timothy. If he needed such admonition—educated, trained, and in the active ministry—so do we. The work rises before us in grandeur; the voice of God calls us; but much depends on our devotion to the work. The minister is unlike other teachers. They simply teach art or science, without reference to moral character. The painter may be an excellent workman, may teach his art thoroughly, and yet be a very bad man. The college professor may teach clearly the highest problems in physics, and yet may be grossly immoral. But the minister is blended with the truth which he teaches. He may expound the doctrines of the Bible intellectually; but he cannot preach properly without a personal realization of the truth.

I congratulate you, young gentlemen, on your devotion to this high and holy calling. I have spoken strongly and solemnly of the responsibility of the office, and of the devotion necessary in order that you might rest on solid foundations. Having done that, I rejoice that God has counted you worthy, putting you into the ministry. Your work associates you with the purest and best minds on earth; with the men who have done and are doing the greatest work in the purification and elevation of society. For your greatest usefulness in it you need decision of character. You should feel that the whole course of your life is settled; that you have been taken out of the mass of men for one special duty. All your powers of body and spirit, your head, hands, and heart, should be consecrated to this one work.

Your motto should be: "This one thing I do." Where there is singleness of purpose there is usually great success. "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." Mr. Wesley once said of a young minister of only average talent and culture: "Other men *may* do good; this man *must* do good, for he thinks of nothing else." You will make but little progress if you look at the ministry as a stepping-stone to anything else, or as a work in which you can spend part of your time, and have a large margin for other duties. In his early ministry, before he had received the holy baptism, Dr. Chalmers once said that a minister should discharge all his duties to his people, and yet have five days in the week for other business. When he felt the greatness of the work and his soul had fully entered into it, he publicly retracted this statement, saying that he neglected to estimate two magnitudes—the littleness of time, and the greatness of eternity. Do not think of being a minister and something else. Archangels' powers are too feeble for the conversion of the world. You must have a holy ambition to produce the greatest possible result; not merely for to-day, but for the entire period of your ministerial career.

The young minister is frequently perplexed to know what model he should set before him. He admires some of his professors, some leading men in the pulpit to whom he is listening, or in whose steps he desires to tread. To him they are heroes; and unconsciously he is a kind of hero worshipper. But the selection of any model is a dangerous matter. No man is perfect, and we are much more likely to imitate defects than excellencies. We do well to follow glorious examples of holy living and earnest devotion to the ministry; but imitation of manner, whether personal or professional, is decidedly injurious. God has not made the spears of grass precisely alike; much less two human beings. He has impressed individuality on the mind, as well as on the features. It is not His law to duplicate copies. His wisdom is shown, too, in using a vast variety of instruments, and in blending a vast variety of persons into the image of the one great Saviour.

Avoid, then, all desire for imitation. Be yourselves. Conse-

crate *yourselves*, not imitations of others, to the service of Christ. Your great aim should be to place before you the only true model, the Lord Jesus Christ. I suppose that you, as well as myself, have often wished for a description of Christ's person and of His appearance. Is it not remarkable that among the four evangelists there is not a single allusion to His height or size or temperament, to the colour of His eyes or hair, the form of His features, or the intonation of His voice. Had there been such a record, what feelings of exultation would those have enjoyed who most resemble Him! And what fears would have perplexed those unlike Him as to their acceptance by Him or their power of doing good! Nor have we any description of the apostles, with the exception, possibly, of an allusion to St. Paul. We have their mental characteristics and their moral features; but not one hint as to their countenance, size, strength, or voice. The meaning of all this, as I understand it, is that we should copy no man. Our likeness to Christ should be a moral likeness, and our imitation of Him should be in always doing good. Is it not also a little singular that not one word is said about the dress of the disciples; or that not a direction should be given as to what colour they should wear, or what the shape of their coats or cloaks should be? It is not even intimated that Peter's dress was different from that of the other disciples? And is it not still more remarkable that, when Christ sent out the disciples, He should charge them not to provide two coats, or, as Mark has it, "not put on two coats"? Is it not strange that they were not allowed to have one coat for travelling and for common work, and another for the pulpit? Does it not seem as though they were to be perfectly like another man, to preach in the same garb in which they travelled, and to show themselves to be members of the common humanity? How much like the present successors of the apostles they must have been!

Dismissing, then, from your thoughts all allusion to human models, take as your spiritual exemplar only the Lord Jesus Christ, and the apostles only so far as they were inspired, and as they perfectly followed Him. You first duty will be to get such a conception of Christ in all His glorious offices as will enable you

to present Him vividly before the people. You must study the record of every utterance which He made, of every act which He performed. You must enter into the spirit of His compassion, His condescension, His diligence, and His love. To do this fully, you will need the light of prophecy concentrated upon Him, and you must view Him in all the circumstances of the people among whom He dwelt. You must study not only the style of Christ's teaching, and the methods of His work, but you must study Him personally, until you have taken into yourselves the stamp of His character and the impress of His own image. You must then translate His Spirit into all your circumstances. In your association with others you must think : What would Christ have said ? What would have been His Spirit ? Amidst opposition you encounter, how would Christ have borne it ? Amidst work to be done, how would Christ have performed it ? And so, in all your intermingling in society, you are to manifest the Spirit of Christ. To manifest it successfully, you must have it. You must realize the full meaning of these words : "Christ in you the hope of glory."

With this image of Christ in your minds, and with His Spirit in your hearts, you will survey the work to be accomplished, bearing in mind that neither argument nor rhetoric of your own can save the people ; and yet that the best powers of these which you can possibly gain may be wielded by the Holy Spirit for the salvation of men. Your one work must be to hold up Christ before men, and so present Him that the people shall see Him through your life, as well as through your representation. People judge not so much of truth in its abstract as in its embodied form. You may speak of the meekness and love of Christ ; but you stand in Christ's stead before their eyes, and they look for that meekness and love in *you*, and you dishonour your Master when you exhibit a spirit different from His. You must realize, with the Apostle : "For me to live is Christ." Your life must be hid in Him.

Paul said to Timothy : "Let no man despise thy youth ; but be thou an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." You stand before your

congregations to show them how a Christian should live, how he should converse, how he should mingle in society, how gentle, loving, and patient he should be. If the fugleman who stands before the undrilled soldier to show him by his example what the word of command means commits an error, his example is copied, and the drill is imperfect.

So you are to stand as fuglemen before your churches. If your spirit is wrong, theirs will be also.

That you may gain this high condition, daily reading of the Holy Scriptures is necessary. The soul needs food more than the body. Jesus says: "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." Your object in thus reading should be not to gain matter for sermons, nor for the proof of favourite doctrines, nor for the purposes of controversy; but to sustain your own spiritual strength. You should discipline yourself to read personally, not alone professionally. In his reading the young minister is too liable to apply passages to those around him, and thus he fails to realize the spiritual needs of himself. He is like a certain maiden lady who always cast glances on those around her when she joined in the response: "Have mercy upon us miserable sinners!"

So also is it essential to be a man of prayer. While the minister prays for his people, he must pray especially for himself. He must bear upon his bosom, as did the old high priest, the names and wants of the people. But first of all he must bring his own sacrifice to the altar. Successful ministers have been always men of prayer. You remember how Luther and Calvin used to spend whole nights in prayer before their sermons.

In this they copied the great Master. See Luther wrestling on the floor all night in agony of prayer on the eve before the Diet of Worms, and you will not be surprised at his noble answer the next day, nor at his subsequent declaration: "*Bene orasse est bene studuisse.*"

Another element of success is faith—personal faith in the atoning merits of Christ, our only sacrifice and our only mediator. Through it we enjoy the consciousness of the forgiveness of sin, and the assurance of our acceptance with God. We also need

that faith which accepts the Bible as God's Word, that believes implicitly all His promises ; that feels perfectly satisfied that God's Word will have its fulfilment ; and that Christ's presence everywhere and at all times accompanies His ministers, so that, in the pulpit or at the bedside of the sick, there is always an assurance of the accompanying Saviour.

In ministerial deportment the utmost care must be used. Conversation should be genial and pleasant, and, at the same time, pure and instructive. Neatness should be cultivated without affectation, and cheerfulness without levity. We must beware of thinking ourselves better than others because we have different work to do, or in any way separating ourselves from the society around us. We are ministers, and yet servants. Christ identified Himself with the common people. They heard Him gladly, and felt that He sympathised with their sorrows. Even the poor outcasts approached Him trembling, and not without hope. In the pulpit and everywhere, we must manifest the spirit of the Blessed Master, and be willing to extend a helping hand to the distressed.

To accomplish the most for humanity, you must carefully guard your own health and strength. No definite rules can be laid down to suit all instances. You must carefully watch the effect of your food, and eat chiefly what is plain and simple. You will have kind friends, who will invite you to their bountiful tables, and urge you to partake freely. But let them not kill you with kindness. Remember the wise man says : "When thou sittest to eat with the ruler, consider diligently what is before thee, and put a knife to thy throat if thou be a man given to appetite. Be not desirous of his dainties, for they are deceitful meat." In addition to recommending simple diet, let me caution you against late suppers. Mr. Wesley believed they produced nervous disease, and strongly cautioned his young preachers against both meat suppers and late suppers.

My own observations have led me to the same opinion. Early in my ministry it was the common practice for those who preached in the evening to eat no supper before preaching ;

but, after the service, to partake of refreshment at nine or ten o'clock at night. I adopted a different course, eating at the regular hour, though sparingly before preaching, and resolutely refusing all food, except sometimes a cracker, after preaching. Nearly all of those who indulged suffered in the end; while my health greatly improved. But, as there is no one law that will suit all circumstances and all temperaments, each must be a law to himself. If his meals make him feel heavy and unfit for study, let him guard against a repetition. If, on the other hand, he has a feeling of buoyancy, and can study clearly, let him so partake. He has begun well.

As with food, so in regard to sleep, the same rule will not suit all persons. As a rule, six to eight hours will be sufficient. Some are able to do with much less. John Owen and Lord Brougham slept about four. Napoleon allowed himself five hours. Mr. Wesley about six, or from six to seven. Each must determine for himself, guarding against loss of sleep. When a student, I required seven hours. My custom was to retire at nine, and rise at four; but every few days, I found myself over-sleeping my time some five or ten minutes, or more. I became satisfied that I required fully seven hours sleep; and any moments I lost before I dropped asleep, or if I chanced to wake in the night, must in some way be made up. I had a fellow-student, likewise preparing for the ministry, who scarcely ever retired before eleven, and was at his studies again between two and three o'clock in the morning. He was diligent and faithful, but it seemed to me that he never got wide awake all day.

The hours of rising will also vary. I was brought up in the old-fashioned way of rising early; but that, like many other old fashions, is at present by many regarded as a relic of antiquity, if not of barbarism. I may be influenced by early associations; but my opinion is that the morning is the favourable time for study. The old proverb reads: "The morning hour has gold in its mouth." Protracted study at night I believe to be unfavourable to health. A slight fever of excitement arises in the system from the labours and anxieties of

the day. Under this excitement the brain may act more rapidly; but it makes a draft on the system, and sooner or later will produce nervous prostration and severe disease.

Avoid all stimulants of every character which may be recommended to strengthen your voice, or to assist you in pulpit duties. I would scarcely suppose that any one who feels himself called to the ministry will countenance their use; yet kind friends will sometimes suggest that you are weak, your nerves are tremulous, you have been out in the cold, you need a stimulant, and they will urge the taking of a little wine or brandy before preaching. These friends will tell you that the most distinguished ministers are in the habit of using them; and I regret to say that in many churches, both wine and brandy are there kept in the vestry for the use of the minister, both before and after preaching. On my first visit to the Old Country, a kind sexton seemed to be as much astonished that I would not accept them, as I was astonished at their being offered. I have known some young ministers who have used a few drops of paregoric or opium to give them strength for the pulpit. I am glad to say that I have known but few such cases; but I must add that these were led in the end to either physical or moral ruin. Dr. Alexander says: "The instances of apostacy within our knowlege stare at us like the skeletons of lost travellers in the sands of the desert." Instances of clerical drunkards and the like forewarn us. Others limit themselves to two or three cups of strong coffee or tea. The effect of these is, unquestionably, to give greater strength to the system for a time; but all such is a draft which must be paid with interest. Unnatural excitement will be followed by depression. God does not require us to use artificial strength in the pulpit. We must give ourselves in our best vigour and culture in His service; but we should so give ourselves that the service of one hour shall not destroy our power for subsequent usefulness. I believe one reason why so many ministers complain of "Blue Monday" is, that they have keyed up their system beyond its natural tension, and, the excitement passing away, they are left depressed. So with tobacco. In some places congregations are unwilling to receive a minister who

uses it. Many families almost dread the visits of such ministers, lest their growing sons should be led to form the habit from the example of the minister. The least that can be said is that it is a costly mode of self-indulgence, and, as such, it stands in the way of ministerial usefulness. He pleads the missionary cause and urges his congregation to economize; but his words fall powerless when they see that he does not love the cause of missions enough to restrain his own self-indulgence. To many, the odour of tobacco smoke is disagreeable, especially in the sick-room. There are some persons of plethoric habit who may be benefited by using tobacco, and a small amount may be of service medicinally in cases of bronchial difficulty; but to nervous temperaments, such as ministers usually are, it is an unmixed evil. It gives temporary tension, to produce ultimate relaxation. Not a few cases have I known of most promising and talented young men, who have been by it hastened to an untimely grave. I suppose there is a sort of enjoyment connected with it, for I have seen men sit for an hour smoking, with their feet upon a table, professing to be studying. I have no doubt they had visions of greatness and glory; but prolonged observation shows that their lives usually ended, with their cigars, in smoke.

The young minister is to commence his studies. He may, indeed, have graduated with honour both from college and the theological school; yet he has only been learning how to study. His great work now lies before him. On leaving the institution, he feels free from restraint. The clock does not call him; professors are not waiting; lectures are not pressing; and he feels a luxury in being his own. He is in danger of losing his habits of study; for what is not done systematically is not done well.

To be successful, he must mark out a system for himself. He must arrange his hours of study, and adhere to them as much as possible. In this way much may be done. Hannah More says a good packer will get in twice as much as a bungler.

As far as possible, the morning hours should be spent in study, and made as free from interruption as possible. Dr. Alexander says: "Tell me how you spent your forenoons in your early ministry, and I shall be able to tell you better how you preach now."

It is difficult to say what number of hours should be thus devoted. I should be inclined to place the minimum at three hours, and the maximum at six. Mr. Wesley enjoined his preachers, wherever practicable, to spend all the morning in study, or at least five hours in the four-and-twenty. Many German students spend from twelve to sixteen hours in study daily. Poole occupied himself for ten years, rising at two and three in the morning, and studying till late in the afternoon, taking only a short recess for his simple meals. A preacher, however, has such a variety of duties, when in charge of a congregation, as to make it impracticable for him to study more than five or six consecutive hours. Besides, the preacher has this advantage: he can be studying everywhere. Unlike men whose business is in the shop or counting-room, and is laid aside when they leave the place, the minister finds subjects for study wherever he goes. The families he visits; the social gatherings he attends; the men he encounters in business; the children in the streets, furnish him subjects everywhere. He is God's messenger to benefit every one of them. Hence he studies their habits of life, their progress in knowledge, the controlling influences around them. He searches for the key which shall open their hearts, so that he may instruct them, afford them consolation, and alleviate their sorrow. His business is more with men than with books. If the poet could say

“The proper study of mankind is man,”

much more is it true as to the minister. Human nature spreads out before Him. He must study the souls of men, the associations of thought, the origin of emotions, the manner in which they strengthen or antagonize each other, and the influence which they exert upon the will. For this purpose he needs not only to read the best authors, and the best systems, but to study man himself—especially to study his own congregation, that he may know how to apply to them the Word of God. To discharge his duties perfectly, he will need a zeal approaching enthusiasm, and his whole being must be absorbed in the work. The early apostles gave themselves continually to the

Word of God and to prayer. They laboured night and day, publicly and privately, in season and out of season, warning even with tears. So must be the minister of to-day. A man of one work, he studies how to concentrate all possible power to produce one result. As the burning-glass concentrates the rays of light until they form a point of consuming power, so thoughts gathered from all sources, illustrations from all departments, all pass through his mind, and are focussed on one point—the destruction of sin, and the substitution of holiness. It was said by the great Psalmist : “The zeal of Thine house hath eaten me up.” The prophet says : “His Word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones.”

The strongest element of power is love for humanity. Christ loved men so much that He gave Himself to die for them. The true minister must also exhibit an intensity of love. When the sick came to Jesus, He asked no questions as to race, parentage, or birth ; no questions as to their conceptions of Him or whether their parents or friends were His friends. He simply healed them all. He showed them His kindness by His cleansing touch, and sparks of grace coming from Him electrified their souls. So the minister must be doing good to those around him. They may dislike him and avoid him ; but that does not diminish his obligation to do them good. We must follow with a spirit of love those who repel us and would flee away. The Apostle had so much of this spirit that we hear him saying : “I will very gladly spend and be spent for you, though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved.” So intense was this affection that he exclaimed : “For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen, according to the flesh.” The same intense agony of spirit was manifested by Moses, when he pleaded for the Israelites : “Yet now, if Thou wilt forgive their sins— ; and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy Book, which Thou hast written.” The same spirit dwells in the bosom of all earnest and successful ministers. “Give me souls, or I die !” has been the exclamation of many a devoted servant of God. This longing earnestness will manifest itself in the spirit of the minister, will be breathed into his sermons, and

will actuate him in all his duties. Men will see that he is in the ministry not simply as a means for getting a livelihood, but that his mission is to save and bless humanity.

In his intercourse with society the preacher is to avoid a spirit of dogmatism. The things connected with the pulpit naturally lead in this direction. The pulpit is the theme of the preacher. He utters his message authoritatively, and he is very liable to utter his own thoughts in the same manner. The attorney has his antagonistic counsel watching him every moment, questioning his authorities, denying the correctness of his statements, showing the fallacy of his arguments, and the irrelevancy of his illustrations. He has got to be perpetually on his guard. Attorneys treat this as a necessary incident in professional life, and, while excited this hour, they are genial and pleasant the next. But the minister, unused to contradiction or reply, thinks himself insulted if one calls in question the correctness of his views or the accuracy of his statements. It would be a good thing for you if you could have some true friend who would carefully show you the weakness of your arguments, the defects in your statements, or any errors, either of speech or manner, into which you may have fallen. Such a man would be your greatest friend. And yet how few are willing to receive kindly such admonition!

Sometimes a morbid sensitiveness, almost amounting to irritability and peevishness, impairs a minister's usefulness. This does not arrive directly from his work. The spirit of the Gospel is one of patience and love; but his irritability springs out of a constitutional tendency. The minister is generally of an active temperament, and frequently of fine taste and æsthetic culture. His whole training develops nervous sensibility. Poets and sculptors, painters and singers, are proverbially irritable. Whatever is incongruous or inharmonious shocks them. Musical connoisseurs are sometimes in terrible agony while others are enjoying a plain evening song. Every minister knows, or will know, the troubles that arise among singers, and the difficulties of keeping large choirs together. It is the result of their peculiarly sensitive organism. Preachers are liable to the same influences. They may not be

either fine singers or renowned poets or painters ; but they live in a realm of nervous excitement. They have a poetic outlook. They see images of grandeur and conceptions of purity and glory. The realities of life, the hard knocks of the world, the discords of society, affect most unfavourably such constitutions. But the minister should remember that he is sent to exhibit the beauty of the Christian life and a spirit of gentleness and patience in the midst of an agitated world.

One great source of the minister's annoyance is connected with his pecuniary support. In nine cases out of ten this will be quite limited. He has been well educated, associated with respectable society, admires the beautiful in paintings, and feels the absolute necessity of books. But he has not a fortune at his command. His salary, though oftentimes meagre, is not promptly paid, and many a sad heartache comes from inability to meet pressing wants and demands. The true remedy can be found only in economy. In college life he studied political economy ; but in ministerial life his studies will be protracted and severe in personal and domestic economy. An inflexible resolution should be formed never to get in debt. “Owe no man anything,” is an apostolic injunction. John Randolph is reported to have said in Congress : “I have found the philosopher's stone. It is : *Pay as you go.*”

The young minister will need to guard against self-conceit. He may have been successful in preaching, and fancies he has already overcome all difficulties, and will take his place as one of the leaders of the land. He has scarcely descended from the pulpit when someone is silly enough to tell him—and he is foolish enough to believe—that he has preached a fine sermon. He compares himself with some able and aged minister, and fancies that he is already more popular ; and he lays aside his sermon with the conviction that it is as nearly perfect as a human production can be, and he has little more need for study or care, because his fame is already sealed.

It cannot be denied that there is a tendency among churches to seek for young men, rather than for the old ; and, I believe, this is one of the great errors of Christian congregations. It is

not so in other professions. The older a physician is, and the more cases he has successfully treated, the greater is the confidence placed in him. The attorney, as he grows in years, is supposed to increase in knowledge and skill; and, whilst clients are willing that the younger members of the firm should draw up papers and prepare the case, they desire the counsel and advice of the senior members to guide the case through its intricacies. A statesman never grows too old to be appreciated and sought for. Russell, Brougham, Palmerston, Webster, and Clay were leaders as long as they lived. To-day Gladstone, Disraeli, Bismarck, and Gortschakoff are the men who control in great measure the destinies of Europe. Why should it not be so in the ministry? Why is it that men turn, in the most important interests of life affecting themselves and their families, from the counsels of age and experience to those of youth and less skill?

I may not be able to answer this question satisfactorily either to you or to myself. One reason is, I believe, the neglect of study on the part of many aged ministers. They lose that stimulus which belongs to other professions. To the physician every case is a new study. New remedies are discovered and recommended. He must keep abreast of the times, or some intruder will take away his practice. The attorney finds some new element in almost every case. New decisions are given by the Supreme Court, and he must study them. In statesmanship new complications are constantly arising. The connections of nations are so numerous, the questions involved are so various and sometimes so vast, as to require the utmost comprehension to grasp them, and the closest attention to the least minutiae and detail. The statesman has no old sermon that he can pick up and apply. He must think and study and write, and thus keep his mind ever active and fresh. There is no time for him to nod or sleep. But the old minister sits down under his vine or fig tree, and there is no one to molest him or to make him afraid. He hurls thunderbolts at the heads of scientists who are a thousand miles away, and who will never hear his thunder; he descants upon the sins of the Egyptians, who have been mummies for thousands of years; or he discourses upon the pride of Babylon or Nineveh, which have

been swept away for ages. He is pressed for time, and brings before his congregation of to-day a discourse which he had made twenty years ago, on an issue then living, but now almost forgotten. His thoughts are of the past; his sermons are of the past; and the generation of to-day feels that he is scarcely one of them.

But, independent of this, society loves to be stirred or excited. Youth has greater power in rousing it; has more enthusiasm and zeal. Whether it be more earnest in heart or not, it exhibits greater earnestness in action. The eye sparkles more brightly, the utterance is more rapid, the gesticulation more excited, and the whole bearing more impassioned. There is no need of age losing its keenness of thought, though it may somewhat its energy of manner. I think the latter is almost inevitable.

I must not touch much on metaphysics; yet I may say that minds differ generically in two things: First, in the rapidity with which thought succeeds thought. I can fancy it quite possible that some men may think two or three times as fast as I can. In the image cast from the camera you have sometimes seen how slowly a shadow may pass across the curtain, and then again how rapidly one chases another. It may be so across the field of mind. Where thoughts move most rapidly in succession, conclusions are more rapidly reached; and if, as some philosophers fancy, the origin of the idea of duration is from the flow of thought, one man may seem to live longer in a month than another in a year. Now, as the pulse, in the same person, beats more rapidly in youth and more slowly in age, so is it true in regard to the succession of thought.

The second element in which minds differ is in the number of thoughts which troop across the field. I have no faith in the theory sometimes advanced that we can have only one idea in the mind at a time. If that were so, there could be no comparison and no reasoning; there would be no fancy, no imagination. Some minds are very narrow; they are your severely logical minds. Their whole strength is spent in examining how one link of thought is fastened into another, and how strong and unbroken is the chain. The chief motion of their minds is in a

straight line; and, as the hound pursues the hare without looking around right or left, so such minds pursue an idea, and sometimes when they catch it they almost kill it. Still they have their use. They are logical, severly logical; though the skeletons they form are so dry that one may well ask: "Can these dry bones live?" Other minds, however, see a whole platoon of thoughts, usually one advancing something in the character of a captain, while the others are mere privates. Such men write and speak fervidly. They deck with jewels their favourite idea, and cover it with a profusion of ornaments. They are rich in illustration, abundant in metaphors, and their imagery is so luxuriant that the main idea gets lost in the foliage and escapes them utterly. In listening to them, you are bewildered, and cannot tell what is meant. Habit largely influences and controls us; but I think the ordinary law is that, without careful study and constant culture, not only is the succession of thoughts more sluggish in age, but the width of the platoon is also diminished. Age may think more correctly, but less ornamentally; and the common mind is pleased with illustrations, figures, and ornaments. Grander stores of knowledge and broader views of life are needed by the aged to compensate for the diminution of the power to charm and impress.

There is another reason why the young minister is sometimes preferred. The human mind has a love for noticing development or growth. We love the beauty of the morning. From the clear sky we anticipate a bright and beautiful day. The noon hour brings with it the thought of declination. We wander through the garden, and the opening bud is more beautiful than the full-blown rose. With the former there is the thought of beauty with the added thought of increasing beauty; but with the full-blown rose comes the idea of decay. So, too, in realms of business, men prefer investing in growing towns rather than in older ones. They purchase corner-lots, not because of their value to-day, but for what it is supposed they will be worth ten years hence. So is it with the ministry. Men love to hear the young minister, for, they say, he preaches a fine sermon, and he will preach better by-and-by. They take stock in him not

because of what he is, but of what he will be. They admire his utterances not merely because of what they are, but for the promise they give of coming oratory. So, because of this feeling, they prefer him to the man who is fully developed, and whose real value to-day may be much greater. But if that young man rests on his laurels; if he fails to progress in his studies; if he preaches the same sermon ten years afterwards, the church will regret its investment, because the anticipated rise is not realized. It may be illustrated by what we find in our own families. The little child just beginning to speak is an object of admiration and delight. The first time he says "Pa" or "Ma" distinctly, the family is enraptured; and when he is able to pronounce his first sentence, they pat him on the head, and clap their hands for joy. They call him a coming genius; but if ten years pass away, and he makes no improvement in his speech, it will not be on the *head* they will pat him.

While the young minister should be guarded against self-conceit, he is also to be cautioned against discouragement. Eminence is not gained at once. The orators of to-day, like the orators of old, struggle with difficulties. The preacher who seems to speak with ease and power has gained his position by long-continued effort. The work he does to-day is not of to-day. Sir Joshua Reynolds was requested, it is said, by a nobleman to paint for him a picture of his daughter. The picture was completed, and the bill presented, amounting to fifty guineas. The nobleman objected to paying so large a price, saying that it cost the artist the labour only of a few days. Sir Joshua replied that he was mistaken. It had taken him forty years to paint that picture. So the sermon of to-day, or the work of to-day, though just planned or executed, is really the work of years of thorough culture.

I presume there are but few young men who have not felt a sense of discouragement when listening to the effort of superior thinkers or orators. They should remember, however, first, that possibly they may equal these orators, or thinkers, at some future period, and their example should be a stimulus; secondly, that God gives but few such men to His Church, and

there is plenty of room for earnest workers, even if not so highly talented.

Let me again speak of myself. The only severe temptation I ever had to quit the active work of the ministry was during my first year of preaching. A church was finished on the circuit on which I travelled, and an eminent minister was called to the dedication. He was a man of great mental power, an acute and original thinker, but of delicate health. For some years he had been troubled with doubts and perplexities, partly owing to his ill-health and partly to some Unitarian works which he had read. But now his health had improved, and he had emerged from his doubts into a clear, strong faith, and he was enjoying the sacred influence of the Holy Spirit. During the services, he preached five sermons full of thought, most forcible in expression, and accompanied with divine unction. I thought then that I had never heard such sermons, and I still think that I have heard but few equal to them. The effect upon me was one of humiliation and discouragement. I felt that I had no right to stand in the sacred desk, and utter my thoughts, when the services of such men could be secured. I resolved to close my connection with the circuit at the end of the year. I did not dare to think of ceasing to preach; but I thought I would be a local preacher. I would support myself by another profession, and preach whenever and wherever I could find a place to do good. I mentioned my purpose to but one friend, who had heard these sermons as well as myself, and he protested most emphatically against my leaving. Before the year closed, I had a most interesting service, at which I invited a brother minister, one year older than myself, to preach, though I knew nothing of his qualifications. The congregation was unusually large and intelligent. Before he had proceeded far, I discovered that I had made a mistake. His thoughts were crude and disjointed, and he murdered the king's English. I was deeply mortified. I got my head down behind the pulpit, and as he proceeded it got lower and lower. I was chagrined and vexed, and said to myself, "As long as the Church has room for such ministers, I will stay

and preach on." It was the last temptation I ever had. Since I have been bishop, it has been my lot to give that minister an appointment. He has never excelled as a preacher. Though I have kept his name strictly to myself, I never meet him without feeling a sense of gratitude to him, for through his stumbling, though without knowing it, he was the cure of my discouragement.



IV.

INDIRECT PREPARATION FOR THE PULPIT.

EVERY work of importance demands preparation. As preaching is the most exalted duty which God has devolved upon men, it requires the most thorough qualifications. Yet there are a few persons who claim that the minister is to speak without pre-meditation. They profess to obey the declaration of our Saviour to His disciples: "Take no thought how or what you shall speak; for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." This direction, however, was given only to those who were delivered into the hands of governors and kings to be scourged and bound for their faith. It was given also only to those who were miraculously endowed, and to whom Christ had given power over unclean spirits to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of diseases. Hence, the direction is applicable only in the present day to such as can show similar power, or who are arrested and brought before magistrates for Christ's sake. Those who speak without pre-meditation claim that they thus honour the Holy Spirit, and that they rely not on their own knowledge, or argument, or eloquence; but on divine inspiration. I would not for one moment depreciate the office or influence of the Holy Spirit, nor the promised presence of Christ with His disciples; but the work of preaching has an analogy to other work which God requires men to perform. The farmer prepares the ground, procures the desired seed, sows it properly, and carefully protects the growing crops; yet God alone gives the harvest. He has put life into the seed, and waters

and warms it with the showers and sunlight of heaven. The physician calls at the bedside of the suffering, carefully examines the character of the disease and its progress, and selects the best remedies, according to his knowledge. But it is because God has so formed the human frame and so fixed the qualities of the remedies that health may be thus regained.

God has given to the minister His Word as the sword of the Spirit; has given to him knowledge and skill for its use and sympathy for his congregation. The Holy Spirit shines upon them all, illuminating the sacred page, guiding the minister, and inclining the hearts of his congregation to receive the truth; so that, though Paul may plant and Apollos may water, God gives the increase.

Strictly speaking, extempore preaching is impossible. The minister may select a text without having his thoughts specifically arranged, and may depend upon his memory and imagination for the utterances he is about to make. But his power of speech he received in infancy. The words he employs he has used from childhood. If he quotes from Scripture or refers to any incident within his experience or observation, he is using his memory. The extemporaneousness of his speech will be only in the order in which his thoughts are presented, or in such suggestions as at the moment may occur.

The office of the Holy Spirit is thus defined by our Saviour: “He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” When Christ sent forth His disciples to preach, He gave them their sermon, commanding them: “As ye go, preach, saying: ‘The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.’” It was a short sermon, but it stirred the hearts of those who heard it. His further directions were to re-preach the lessons they had heard from Him: “What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light; and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops.” And in the great commission He directed them to “Teach all nations to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” He thus gave to His disciples the sum and substance of their preaching, which they were careful to remember and faithful to proclaim wherever

they went. The Apostle charges Timothy: "Till I come give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Meditate upon these things. Give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all." And again: "If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words."

The preparation for the pulpit may be direct or indirect. The direct preparation applies to the arrangement of the materials which may be already on hand. The indirect, to the accumulation of materials which shall be held in reserve and ready for use whenever necessary. This indirect preparation will now be considered.

"Preach the Word," was the emphatic injunction uttered by St. Paul among his last words. If preaching be the declaration of a message based upon God's Word, that Word is the only thing which we should preach. We are informed that "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Timothy is congratulated: "From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." That sublime passage of the psalmist commencing with "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul," sets forth the value of the Word, in most beautiful language. And Jesus says: "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life."

That the minister may successfully preach the Word, he must study it diligently. He must not read it merely for his personal profit, to which reference was made in a former lecture; but that he may be able to explain it clearly to others, and draw from it such lessons as may be for their instruction and spiritual profit. For this purpose he must not only read consecutively and thoroughly. He must so study each separate book as to become

fully endued with the spirit of the writer ; he must study the age in which he lived and the people for whom he more especially wrote, together with the attendant circumstances which gave significance and force to the words. The relation of each part to the whole and as embraced in the whole should be so considered that the unity of the Scriptures may be more fully comprehended. It has a unity extending through the ages ; made up of many parts ; proceeding from the pens of many writers ; yet so beautifully blended in its various hues as to make one bright, brilliant light to shine upon men both in time and eternity.

For its clear elucidation Scripture must be compared with Scripture, and the helps of competent writers and commentators must also be used. Works illustrating the manners and customs of the several ages, the historic connection between the Israelites and the surrounding nations, the geography and topography of the Holy Land will also be of immense service to the Biblical student. I shall not detain you by alluding to specific points, or by attempting a comparison of the relative value of the studies that you are called to pursue under the instruction of your able and honoured professors. I would earnestly recommend, however, that your chief attention be given to the Word itself —to the illustration of Scripture by Scripture. The Bible should be so studied that it shall be at the command of the preacher at all times. Whatever else he may know or may not know, he must, in order to be successful, have a ready knowledge of sacred language. In it he will find the foundation for his best arguments, his most pointed lessons, as well as his finest illustrations. Its poetry is beautiful, its imagery sublime ; but its great value is that it is Truth, stated by the Lord Himself in such form and manner as will best reach the human conscience. The preacher who quotes much from the Bible has not only in the estimation of his hearers the authority, "Thus saith the Lord," but there is also a divine unseen power so joined to those words that they cannot be uttered without effect. Words of men, however forcible and however beautiful they may be, are but words ; but the Word of the Lord, revealed to men and for men, has connected with it a divine power beyond the words them-

selves. How this is I may not be able to tell; but we have illustrations throughout the Holy Scriptures. When the Israelites stood at the Red Sea, there was no power in the words of Moses more than in ordinary words; yet because God directed him to utter them the waters were parted, the dry land appeared, and the people passed over. When Elisha, with the mantle of Elijah, smote the Jordan, the cloth of the mantle was like other cloth, and Elisha's arm was no stronger than the arm of another; yet the smitten river opened a pathway, and Elisha went over. When Jesus spoke to the winds and the waves, I suppose there was nothing remarkable in His tone or manner, yet the elements obeyed, for they felt the voice of God. You remember how the seventy came back after Jesus had sent them forth to preach, and informed Him with joy that even the devils were subject unto them through His name. I suppose they were amazed when they found the words which they uttered accompanied or followed by such glorious results. It was because the words they spoke were the words which Christ gave them. So those words from your lips will be the "power of God unto salvation."

You will find also that ministers the most eminent for usefulness have been the closest students of the Divine Word. Some of them knew but little else. Take Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," that wonderful work which has probably had a hundred readers where the greatest sermon that the most eloquent preacher ever uttered has but one. We have the sermons of South, Barrow, Calvin, Luther, Wesley, and Edwards in our libraries and among our standard works; but they are read and studied only by a few, while the words of the humble tinker are in almost every cottage, and have brought comfort and peace to many a troubled soul. The secret is, he used God's words more than his own. One of the highest dignitaries of the Church of England is reported to have said: "The Bible and Shakespeare made me Archbishop of York."

Let me caution you against underrating any portion of the Holy Scriptures. The Psalms are full of promise and comfort;

the Gospels and Epistles are rich and instructive ; but they are only parts of the Word of God. Never allow yourselves to think or speak disparagingly of the Old Testament. It is as much the Word of God as the New. It had not been revealed but that God saw that it was necessary for humanity. Its use is not merely historical, prophetic, or explanatory ; but there are rich veins of truth cropping out amongst its legalism, its histories, and even its darkest narratives, like the veins of gold and silver in the rugged quarries of the mountain. May I illustrate by an incident from my own reading and experience ? I was a Bible reader from my childhood, and I remember that very early I was surprised that so many evil things were written about the best men ; that the portraits of some of them were drawn with exceedingly dark colours. There were even passages which, it seemed to me, might have been as well omitted. It did not appear that they added either to the glory of God, or to the real instruction or edification of humanity. When I asked my teachers why they were there, I was answered, it was to show the truthfulness and impartiality of the sacred writers ; that if they had drawn these characters without shadows the portraits would not have been true, and their narratives would have been eulogies, rather than histories. I suppose the explanation was the best which could be given then ; but it was not satisfactory. I could not help saying to myself that if I had written the life of Noah, I would have omitted that so minutely described scene of his drunkenness and disgrace ; had I written the life of Judah, I should have left out his shameful relations with Tamar ; had I been writing a sketch of David, I should have passed more rapidly over the story of Bathsheba ; and I would not have made so prominent the sins of Solomon. Then I was told that these incidents were related that the wonderful mercy of God might be revealed, and that hope might be given to sinners in every age, when it was seen that, notwithstanding these vices and crimes, God pardoned the sins of the repentant. This view gave me more comfort ; but not perfect satisfaction. I was reading one day, when it occurred to me that nearly all these

dreadful things were recorded of the ancestors of Christ ; that Noah was not the only man who had used strong drink, and Judah and David and Solomon were not the only ones who had committed crimes against society. They were all picked men, while around and beneath them was a mass of the degraded and corrupt. Those were passed by ; while the faults of these men, the ancestors of Christ, were carefully recorded. Then there opened before me a new range of thought. The Romanists have ever tried to get the human nature of Christ as far away from our nature as possible ; and, hence, they have taught the immaculate conception of Mary. Not so with the Scriptures. They show that on his human side Jesus was the descendant of ancestors no better than other men ; that among those ancestors were those who had been guilty of every vice and crime possible to humanity ; that the blood which from the human side coursed through his veins had come down for centuries through the vilest of the vile. Yet in that humanity he had dwelt. He could keep it pure and holy. And that humanity, thus representing the human race, he has exalted to the highest heavens. Then came to me the consoling thought : What if I have hereditary tendencies ? What if my nature has been derived from sinning ancestors ? That Jesus, who dwelt in a human frame eighteen hundred years ago can dwell in my humanity and can make and keep me pure. Then I thought of His wonderful condescension, and read with new light that passage, " For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." This view has seemed to bring the Saviour closer to me than ever before. He is the Son of man, and as such He not only knows our weaknesses, but is our great High Priest, that is " touched with the feelings of our infirmities, and was in all points tempted like as we are, and yet without sin." How logically and how beautifully the exhortation follows : " Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." I must leave this, however, for such meditations as the subject naturally suggests. I have used it merely as an illustration of how you

may use the Bible for yourselves, and what comfort you may derive from even its apparently useless and darkest passages.

The same thought leads me to speak of Peter and Judas. I am not glad that any man ever did wrong; but I am glad that since Peter cursed and swore and denied his Master, it is recorded of him, and that the betrayal of his Master and his terrible end are recorded of Judas. I am glad, because, if Peter, notwithstanding his fall, was received back into his Master's favour, so may I, though an erring disciple, be brought back and employed in my Master's service. The fact that the apostles went forth boldly preaching the Word, notwithstanding the fall of Judas, encourages us to go forward, notwithstanding a brother minister may have fallen by our side. I remember, when a young pastor, how some case of scandal distressed me exceedingly. I feared lest the influence of the Church might be shattered. But when I remembered that, although one in twelve of the disciples whom Jesus had chosen committed such a terrible crime, yet the Church was founded, and fifty days after was increased by three thousand converts, I felt that there could be no danger of the church now-a-days being overthrown by the fall or crime of one of its members.

I believe that there is no part of the Scriptures which may not be profitable to the Christian; that every single part of it was given for our edification. I have no sympathy whatever with that philosophy which finds myths in the Word of God. I do not underrate the value of true criticism. It is exceedingly important to determine the genuineness and authenticity of the text. I appreciate highly the labors of such men as Griesbach and Alford; but when they have determined what the true text is, I accept it as the Word of God.

Adopt no theory of inspiration which diminishes your reverence for the Bible as the work of the Holy Spirit. By whomsoever He speaks, howsoever He speaks, whosesoever language, memory, and imagination He employs, the revelation is all His own. I heard Cardinal Manning once, in London, claim a superiority in this respect for Romanists over Protestants. He said, in substance, that the Protestants dissect the Bible, finding a myth here and an interpolation there, and accept only what

seemed to be in accordance with their reason. "But," said he, "show me a Catholic priest who shall dare to call in question the authority of a single text, and he shall not be a priest for six hours." The way some of these biblical critics discuss the Bible recalls to my mind a reported saying of President Grant. Some one having mentioned to him that a certain senator, noted for his conceit and egotism, had not much faith in the Bible, his laconic reply was: "Why should he? He didn't write it."

The Bible has this great characteristic: no man is able to comprehend all its truth. Men of different personal peculiarities see such sides of it as are specially applicable to their temperaments and wants. It is true to-day for chronology, to-morrow for history; now for its prophetic imagery, and then for its promises. But, while no man can comprehend the whole, each can find what is amply sufficient for himself. It has something in it for men of all classes and men of all conditions. The preacher reads in the book of the Law, and gets its sense. He translates its Oriental idioms into Western speech; its past tenses into those of the present. He searches its pages to find something for every form of human experience. It is a perpetual fountain from which issues the water of life. It is the armoury from which the Christian soldier is equipped. We are under orders—marching orders. We have received our instructions from the general-in-chief. Shall we not read every line, and study the meaning of every word? There are orders for ourselves personally, orders for our congregations, orders for to-day, and orders for to-morrow. The more frequently they are read, the better they are understood, the more easily and perfectly they can be obeyed.

The New Testament is peculiarly rich in its precious promises; yet it is in great measure an explanation of the Old. The titles of Christ were given in prophecy; His work was typified, and His vicarious atonement was foreshadowed in sacrifices. Everywhere a line of illustration runs through the Old Testament, which is more perfectly developed by the New, like the plant which sends its roots deep into the soil, but unfolds its leaves and blossoms to the sunshine and the air.

There are golden threads which run all through the woof from the beginning to the end. There are clasps which enclose both Genesis and Revelation, and make them one.

Take as an illustration that first verse in St. John's Gospel : "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." To me it points directly to the creation of the world, and the Garden of Eden. On the dwellers in Eden there came down a cloud of darkness, an impressive portent of wretchedness and woe. The gates were to be closed, and cherubim guard the entrance. In this thick darkness, one ray of light pierced through from the throne of God; one word, one promise brought hope to the human heart. That word was spoken to the serpent, but Eve heard it : "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel." Without that word, that promise of a Redeemer, earth had been without joy, life without hope. That word, Eve hid in her heart. When she drew to her bosom her first-born son, I fancy she thought that the promised seed had come, for she called him Cain. "For," she said, "I have gotten a man from the Lord." She hoped that he was to bruise the serpent's head and reopen the gates of Paradise. How sad her heart when her hopes were disappointed, and she saw his hands stained with the blood of Abel! Child after child was born; children's children came to maturity; generation after generation arose; but mankind grew worse and worse, and no Redeemer came. For nine hundred and thirty years Adam watched and waited; but no Messiah appeared. Yet that promise of hope was handed down from generation to generation. It was God's word that a Deliverer should come. Ages rolled on. In the midst of prevailing darkness, there came a ray of light to Enoch, and he prophesied : "Behold! the Lord cometh." The earth was swept with water, and the nations waited century after century, this one word standing as the only light for human faith and hope. The promise was repeated to Abraham, and taken up by the prophets. The Psalmist

heard the voice of the coming Saviour: "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God." This was the only word of life and hope that, while generations passed away like grass, endured for ever. It filled the mind of the apostle when he wrote: "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." This was the Word, the *Logos*, alike of the Old Testament and the New, promised in Eden, manifested in Bethlehem, announced by the angel of the Lord to the wondering shepherds as "good tidings of great joy, which should be to all people;" and then follows that beautiful declaration: "Suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God," and saying: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men." As Miriam led the songs of the daughters of Israel at the passage of the Red Sea, eighty years old though she was, so it has seemed to me that Eve, the mother of us all, led the rapturous song of that heavenly host, as, after four thousand years of waiting, she saw the advent of the promised Redeemer. In the Book of Revelation, Christ again appears. He is called the "Faithful and True." He has bruised the head of the serpent, and it is added: "And He was clothed in a vesture dipped in blood, and His name is called the Word of God." I cannot help turning away with a sense of relief from the interpretation which makes the apostle who leaned on Jesus' breast seek among the Gnostics for that *logos*, the shadow of which they had learned from tradition, while the substance itself is found in the promise made by the Father.

In addition to the study of the Holy Scriptures with all available helps, we should have clear and decided convictions as to the great doctrines of the Bible, and their relations each to the other. The preacher should examine carefully the views held by leading men in reference to these doctrines; should compare them carefully with the Holy Scriptures; and should adopt such views as he believes are clearly derived from the Word of God. Yet he should be so independent in thought as to examine for himself every creed, confession, or system, and not receive it simply on the ground of tradition or antiquity, or because held

by leading minds. The Bible, and the Bible alone, should be the standard of reference—"To the law and to the testimony." At the same time, he should give due regard to the opinions of wise men, and weigh them with care. He should give the utmost consideration to utterances of the Church through all ages, and to those systematized and formulated doctrines which have guided the Church in the hours of trouble and danger, and which good men have claimed with confidence that they were the truth from God. They should not be set aside.

There are some young ministers with whom it seems to be proof sufficient that certain doctrines are wrong, because they were held by the church in other ages. They fancy that all that is old must, therefore, be done away with. They believe they are fitted for reformers; they are born to renovate society, and to usher in a glorious age. Their ambition is to reject all the old-established beliefs, and to strike out in new and unexplored paths. Such young men forget that in theology there can be no new doctrines, for the foundation of all doctrine is in the Bible alone. There may be new trains of thought, more fitting expressions, more pertinent illustrations, and even certain unforeseen duties may be found in the sacred page; but the radical doctrines are unchangeable. They are like the blessed Saviour—"the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." The different views in reference to doctrines have been so thoroughly discussed by the various schools of thought that no new or middle ground is likely to be found. Still I would not repress investigation; I would only urge moderation.

I have nothing to say as to the system of doctrines which you accept; but I would urge you to be men of conviction. Give yourselves no rest until you find the truth as revealed to you; and then believe it, and believe it with all your hearts. Unless you form convictions as to what the Scripture teaches, you are not fitted for leaders. Your trumpet should give no uncertain sound. It is not your place to stand in the pulpit and express doubts. If you have any, let them be hid away before you speak, for you are to bear a message from the Lord. Christ, your great model, spake "as one having authority, and not as

the Scribes." He never uttered a doubt in His teaching. It was positive in its character. The disciples "spake the Word of God with all boldness." You owe this to your congregations, who look to you for instruction and guidance. You owe it to yourselves, for without it your power will be frittered away. Men of force say: "We believe, and therefore speak." Whoever reads the Epistles with care will notice their strong positive utterances. Where there is doubt, there is dimness and hesitation; sharp lines of distinction are lacking, and clear presentation is never given.

Among the doctrines which should be presented most clearly and strongly, and on which the young minister should ever be thoroughly prepared, I name the Divinity of Christ. I pass by any remarks on the being and attributes of God. These are so clear and so fully believed to-day by people generally as to be treated as almost universally accepted. Occasionally sermons may be preached on such topics; but I believe the trouble in such cases is not with the head so much as with the heart. If it be true that "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness," I believe it is also true that out of the heart proceed all evil thoughts, among which infidelity and atheism may be occasionally found. The doctrine of the divinity of Christ is, I believe, the "*articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae*" (Luther) rather than that of justification. The latter has its foundation in the former, and in Luther's time was scarcely called in question. The history of the church in all ages shows that the men who have been most prominent in reforming the world drew their power and inspiration from this doctrine. No church has ever conquered the heathenism of the world, or carried its triumphs into the dark places of the earth, or has been distinguished for saving the fallen and the outcast, but by the exaltation of the cross of the divine Saviour. It was on this conviction of His divinity that Christ promised His Church should stand. When He asked His disciples, "Whom say ye that I am?" and Peter said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God," He replied: "Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it." He had taught His disciples to call Him Master, and He said

to them : " Ye call Me Master and Lord ; and ye say well, for so I am." So the Church ever stands in the same attitude, and looks up to Christ as its divine Lord and Master.

I do not say you must preach this controversially; but preach it prominently. Assume it and declare it as it is taught in the Holy Scriptures. I do not advise you to hold it upon grounds of utility. There are mysteries in the Divine mode of existence beyond the reach of our conceptions. How it may be with others I cannot say; but on this subject analogies, illustrations, and reasoning have never afforded me full satisfaction. I could meet objections with them; I could silence cavillers; but I rest solely on the Word of God as the foundation of my faith.

The depravity of the human heart, the inherited tendency to do wrong, is so fully shown both by observation and experience, that it would seem as though there ought to be no difference of opinion. As to the fact, I think all men everywhere, whatever their opinions in regard to themselves, feel satisfied that in other men the human heart is "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." There may be diversities in speculation as to how that depravity comes, to what extent it reaches, and how it may be overcome; but unless man is so depraved he needs no Saviour, while if that depravity inheres in his nature he needs a Divine Saviour. To man thus in need the doctrine should be preached of an atoning Saviour, who died in his stead, who paid the debt of his sins, and made it possible for God to be just and yet "the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

These are to me the cardinal doctrines of the Gospel—a Divine Saviour making atonement for sinful man, and thereby restoring him to divine favour. On these doctrines and their collaterals every young minister should gather such Scripture proofs, arguments, and illustrations as shall make his Gospel glad tidings to the sons of men. I am aware that among many there is an aversion to doctrinal preaching and a reluctance to obey the direction of Paul to Timothy: "Take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine." And again: "Reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine; for the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall

they heap to themselves teachers having itching ears. And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." The disposition to avoid doctrinal preaching almost inevitably leads to injurious results. By emphasizing doctrines, however, I do not mean that they should be set forth in a controversial manner; but they should be given their proper place and importance. Prominent among these teachings must be the influence of the Holy Spirit. Through its influence alone all good begins in man; it is the agent of our regeneration, justification, and sanctification, and without it there could be no hope and no life for our world. The doctrines of the immortality of the soul, of the resurrection of the dead, and of future rewards and punishments should also be distinctly set forth and given such prominence as we are taught in the Holy Scriptures.

The study of church history is of great benefit to the student. I only wish there was a church history which distinctly and clearly set forth the true life of the church in all ages, and was not so fully occupied with the discussion of questions of orthodoxy or heresy, or the sayings or doings of a few of the principal leaders.

Published sermons also may be highly serviceable, that the young minister may gain an idea of the manner and matter which distinguished those ministers who have been most successful. He should read them, not to copy or imitate; but to find suggestions and inspirations which may add to the breadth of his views and to the facility with which he may perform his work. I would recommend, however, that his reading be confined to the great masters. The materials collected in this way should be thoroughly digested, and they should be transmuted and translated into one's own current of thought. Thus the resulting performance will be individual in its character, but will also be enriched with added thoughts of beauty and grandeur. This will not be plagiarism, for it is not the simple use of another man's thoughts. We coin no new words, or but seldom. The greatest inventors create no new materials, but find new relations for those already existing.

Various plans are pursued in collecting and preserving

materials. The use of scrap-books and common-place books cannot be too earnestly recommended. In reading, it is well to have a pencil and note-book in hand, not only for the sake of entering quotations or marks for reference, but, what is still more valuable, to preserve the thoughts which are suggested to your own mind rather than stated by the author.

As an element of preparation, the pen should be frequently used. I am not speaking now of the question of written or extempore sermons; but of that facility in writing, which, to a minister who composes much, is absolutely essential. You should write much, and strive to write well; yet first write *much*. In Nature, what an immense number of leaves are produced only to fall away. Ten times as many buds and flowers appear as are fully developed into fruit. So with the young writer; write first, trim afterward. Pour out your thoughts as they occur, even should the order not be the most harmonious or the connection the most perfect. The more rapidly you write, the more naturally. The great difficulty with many is that their ideal is so high, their standard so perfect, that they fear to write at all; and when they commence they are discouraged. While correcting one sentence they lose the glow which would have given warmth and life to the next. Write frequently on theological topics, and occasionally write sermons, whether you deliver them or not, for the purpose of securing proper symmetry, continuity, and relation of the various parts.

The studies of the minister should not be confined exclusively to theological reading. He should strive to make himself master, as far as may be, of the general questions pertaining to science and the higher branches of learning. Mental philosophy, especially, should be with him an almost constant study. He should also love to roam throughout Nature. Everywhere there are marks of his Father's hand. The minute, as well as the vast, displays the wisdom and power of the great Creator, and furnishes him lessons of value and illustrations which shall both illustrate and profit. But in all these studies the minister should keep Christ in view as the great central figure, and always bear in mind the work which he is to perform—the erection of a great

spiritual edifice. All subsidiary knowledge is but the scaffolding.

The wants of congregations are so varied, and the range of knowledge so vast, that every department of literature, art, and science may be made tributary to the preacher's influence. Referring to myself again, in my childhood and youth I had a passion for study, and tried to extend my reading in all directions. To some extent I studied the languages of Western Europe. It was merely curiosity; but in my ministry I have found that every single branch of study which I ever perused has been of advantage to me. It has strangely been my lot to attend ministerial meetings in all those countries of which I had studied previously the languages; and, although not able to talk to any great extent in those languages, I could soon understand the deliberations of my brothers.

In keeping abreast of the events of the day, spend not too much time on the daily press or the lighter class of magazines. It is one of the triumphs of our civilization that we can have news at our breakfast-table from all parts of the globe; but the minister should guard against devoting too much precious time to this kind of reading, which is not essential to his important work. Like the bee, he should know how in a few moments to gather honey from the flower, and then fly away, not stopping to count the number of the petals or to delight in the beauty of their colouring. In scientific and theological reviews there are frequently articles of great value to the preacher, and which he may carefully read and ponder; but he is very liable to spend moments in this way which ought to be devoted to more solid reading or to pastoral duty. Still, it is difficult to fix any precise rule on this subject. A wide range of topics is discussed by the daily press, and among the mass there are always some with thoughts of great value. The preacher must grapple with specious forms of disbelief, which are put forth in the columns of the newspapers; he must understand the arguments which are employed to sustain them, and be able to refute them.

The subjects for preaching cover an immense field, and only a glance can be cast at them. Negatively, the object of the

preacher is not solely to preach or enforce morality, considered from any heathen standpoint. He will preach a high and pure morality; but he will present it as issuing from a heart filled with love to God and man. Morality springing not from the heart is like a tree from which the limbs which bear fruit are pruned off and cast away; while Christian morality is like a fully developed, symmetrical tree, in which the life-giving sap permeates every limb and twig, causing it to bear fruit abundantly. Nor is the object of preaching natural religion, or the unfolding of the laws of nature. No amount of knowledge of metaphysics can change the human heart, any more than the knowledge of machinery can set it in motion. Truths of importance may be drawn from the operation of natural laws. Men may be taught the influence and results of their actions; but these have not the power to change the destiny of a human soul. The pulpit is the place for the Master. The preacher utters divine thoughts, and he who tries to draw attention to himself degrades and pollutes the sacred desk. Luther once said: "I must know nothing of Luther; will know nothing of him. I will preach nothing of him—only Christ. The devil may take Luther if he can. If he leave Christ in place, it will be well with us." The great question for the pulpit to ask is, "What think ye of *Christ*?" and the work of the preacher is to give a clear exposition of His character, manifested in the salvation of men.

The minister should grapple with great themes, and not occupy the minds of the people with trivial subjects. The issues of eternity may rest on a single sermon; and in some way, directly or indirectly, every sermon should lead to Christ. With what wonderful topics is the pulpit permitted to deal! The character of God; the responsibility of man as a creature of God, formed by His Divine hand, bearing the impress of His image, the object of the Saviour's death, the possible Son of God and joint heir with Jesus Christ. Then, too, his glorious destiny; his conflict with and triumph over death and the grave; the resurrection of the body; and, strange and incomprehensible as it may appear, his immortality, coeval with the duration of

God Himself! Then, too, the thought that his destiny is in his own hands; that, accepting Christ and obeying the Divine will, he may dwell beside the throne of God for ever; or, rejecting Christ and the offers of salvation, he shall be “punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.” These are the topics for the minister’s preaching which interest every one of his hearers. How pitiable is it to hear leaders of thought say that they cannot tell whence they came nor whither they are going; that life in its origin and nature is low and unworthy of a Creator; that eternity has no voice which has reached the sense of time! Springing out of these great questions is the whole circle of subjects relating to human duty. All men are brothers, because we are the offspring of a common Father. We cannot deny or ignore that common brotherhood, or shrink from its duties, without dishonouring the God and Father of us all. Not only must these important topics be carefully studied and selected, but the relation of each to the other is a matter of no small moment.

The law of God should be distinctly set forth. The congregation should be gathered as round the base of Mount Sinai, as from the summit is heard the voice of God in those commandments which are eternal and unalterable in their character. The effect of preaching the law will be that some hearts will be opened; others may be repelled, and say, “Let God not speak to us any more.” Some will object to the preaching of the law, and say, “Prophesy better things.” But still the law must be preached. It brings the sinner to a recognition of his sins, by showing him that he has transgressed God’s holy law, and the fearfulness of the doom impending over him. The law must be followed by the Gospel. The awakened sinner must be pointed to the Saviour, that he may see that, deep as his transgression may be, the blood of Christ can wash it away. There are many preachers who love to talk of the Gospel alone. They dwell especially on the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of Christ. This is well. It is more than well. It is essential. But sometimes they neglect these matters of the law, and

assign them to a place in a past age, claiming that men now can be best moved by love alone. They may thus rear a beautiful structure ; but its foundation is on the sand. No true edifice can be raised without its foundations being dug deep by repentance toward God. The Gospel has no significance except as it is based on the positive law, which Christ came not to destroy, but to fulfil. The law without the Gospel leads to service ; the Gospel without law leads to antinomianism ; the two combined produce "charity out of a pure heart and of a good conscience and of faith unfeigned."



V.

THE PREPARATION OF THE SERMON.

THE preacher is brought face to face with his life-work in the preparation of the sermon. In a few days the Sabbath will call him to the pulpit. But what shall he preach? The question seems to stare at him from every book which he reads, and to meet him wherever he goes. If he has not yet formed the acquaintance of his congregation, it is not strange that he should be at a loss what subject to select. There are, however, general subjects which can never be out of place. Repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; the duties of prayer and holy living; the rewards of the righteous and the fearful forebodings of the impenitent, are topics which may be presented to any audience. But if the minister has formed an acquaintance with his congregation, out of its peculiar wants and circumstances topics will naturally be suggested. If a man is earnest in his work and fully perceives the danger of many in his congregation, the vices prevalent in the community, the fascinations and allurements which beset the young, the living issues which press upon the community around him, his head and heart will be so full that the question will not be so much, What shall he say? as, Which of the many topics shall be first presented?

Just at this point is found the clear distinction between the true minister whose heart is yearning for his people and who longs to preach to them the Word of Life, and the one who simply fills the pulpit because the time has arrived and he must somehow address his congregation. I would not apply the old adage, "When you have nothing to say, say nothing," for it is important that the regular services be held, that the people sing and pray and worship before the Lord; but I would advise that,

under such circumstances, the service should be both simple and brief. Yet it so happens that ministers who have nothing to say usually take a long time in saying it. If your object be simply to preach a sermon because you have an appointment; if God has not given you any message, and you simply wish to read a beautiful essay, so that men shall say, "What a fine preacher!" or if you have talents for oratory, which you wish to display, then the easiest way to get a sermon is to borrow it from some kind brother. It will save you a good deal of trouble, and accomplish just as much good. If you cannot borrow one from anybody, then you can buy one. They manufacture them in England by wholesale, and sell them for about ninepence apiece. I do not know whether any Yankee genius has yet had sufficient enterprise to go into this department of business. If you can neither borrow nor buy, Paley then comes to your aid, and advises that for every sermon you make, you steal five. This stealing business, however, is not always safe. Sermon thieves, like other thieves, are sometimes caught. I once heard an incident related of a young man who was called to be ordained, and who preached a trial sermon. When the council was called and the effort was pronounced to be good, an aged minister arose, evidently burdened, and informed the council that the sermon was not the young man's own; that he had it in his library in a rare book, and he didn't know that there was another copy in America. The young man was called in to be questioned by this minister. When asked if it was his own, he frankly said, No; that he had heard that minister preach it some time before, and he admired it so much that he had concluded to preach it over. Report does not tell us what they did with the young man; but the old one asked no more questions.

Seriously, we have falsehood and fraud and embezzlement enough in the world without ministers entering into it; and the morality of the congregation can scarcely be expected to be very high, or the people to observe the laws of *meum et tuum*, where the minister steals his sermons, and then asks God's blessing upon them.

Is it, then, lawful ever to preach other men's sermons? I

think it is, occasionally ; but then the fact must be stated. The minister may say : "I have found among Calvin's sermons, or Wesley's, or Robertson's, or Spurgeon's, one so suitable to our circumstances, so perfectly applicable, that I wish to read it to-day." His congregation will very probably admire and approve his choice. Or, what is possibly better, let him present his own views in part, and then adopt for the remainder of his sermon the words of some influential author, giving due credit and notice of what he has done. In this way, the occasional use of other men's sermons may not only be without injury, but of much benefit.

It may be a little digression, but my advice is that the young minister should never speak to his friends or his congregation about being at a loss for a subject, or not knowing what to preach. They will instinctively feel that he has no Divine message for them ; that he is rather thinking of what kind of an effort he can make, and how he can succeed. There may be times when two subjects press upon him, and he doubts which of them will best suit his congregation in its peculiar circumstances. If he has a brother minister or an intelligent friend acquainted with the condition of the congregation, and in whose judgment he can confide, it may be right and proper to ask him about it. Especially may this be the case in visiting a strange congregation. Otherwise, the less conversation about the sermon or the topic before its delivery the better. If the message comes from God, if the minister feels himself under Divine guidance, let him find in careful study of the circumstances, and in the light which comes to him after earnest prayer, the answer which he needs. I once knew an aged minister, a man of great faith and pulpit power, who would never speak about his subject before preaching. He said if he never mentioned it, Satan would not know it, and would not be prepared to counteract his influence ; but if he spoke of it, Satan might hear it, and destroy its power. This was over-sensitiveness ; yet I admire his earnestness of spirit and his desire to do the utmost possible good.

So, after your sermon, court no expressions respecting it. If you are naturally sensitive as to its reception, conversation will

only increase that sensitiveness. You have delivered your message. Leave it with the people and with God. If you make it the subject of conversation, people will think you wish compliments, and will fancy you care more for your reputation than for their souls. Apologies beforehand and suggestions of not enjoying the sermon afterwards have usually their roots in supreme selfishness.

Decide beforehand what end you propose to reach by the sermon. Is it for the impenitent, for the inquirer, or for the edification of believers? Is it to enforce some passing duty, to guard against some danger, or to afford comfort and hope to the suffering and sorrowing? According to the object proposed should the text be selected. It may be, however, that in your reading, or meditation, or pastoral work some text has occurred to you with such peculiar force that you have no difficulty in making a selection. In a few cases, both in my personal experience and in the selection for sermons, a passage of Scripture would occur with such force sometimes that it seemed to stand out from the page in a clearer light and as though printed in bolder type, so that I would seem to see nothing but that text. At other times a text has suddenly slipped from my mind while engaged in other duties, but has come back to me with such frequency and power that it supplanted all other trains of thought. As a rule, in preaching from such texts I have had most success and have seen most immediate results.

Let me caution you against the selection of words of Scripture wrested from their true significance, or such passages as have a peculiar meaning when taken literally, but are used allegorically in the Bible. I knew a minister who selected the word "one," from which he preached a sermon, having as its different headings one God, one faith, one baptism, one heaven, and one hell. He said many good things; but he did not give the sense of the passage or the meaning of the spirit. Another preached on "Six Steps to Heaven;" and another on the text "There appeared a great wonder in Heaven, a woman." I once heard of a man, very illiterate, who fixed on the passage of bringing into the Church "damnable heresies," and, mispronouncing the word, he

announced for his text "damnable hearsays," and proceeded to give a very proper rebuke to the slanders of the day. The true rule is to consider as near as possible what God intended in revealing that portion of His Word. Then you will be in a line with the thoughts of God.

Closely connected with this selection of texts is the selection of topics. These ought always to be of commanding interest, such as the apostles and prophets, and especially our blessed Saviour, brought to the attention of the church. You should discourage that sensational preaching which, while it excites the curiosity and fancy, is of no permanent value. There is a class of preachers who always advertise their topics, and who generally endeavour to attract some persons by the quaintness and eccentricity of their topics. I knew of one minister who preached on "The Value of Backbone"; another occasionally preached "The Devil's Funeral"; another announced a discourse on "Words spoken by neither God, Man, nor the Devil," and when his wondering congregation assembled, they were told that the "words" referred to were uttered by Balaam's ass, and the text was not very inappropriate either. Only the other day I noticed an advertisement of a sermon on "How Jonah lost his Umbrella." It was on the gourd-vine that shaded him. At what an infinite distance from such trifling is the example of the blessed Saviour and His apostles; and how much it must have weakened the confidence of the congregation in the declaration of the minister that he has a message for them from God!

If the young minister is apprehensive that he may run out of suitable subjects for the pulpit, I would recommend him to keep a note-book for texts and subjects. First, let him note down in his daily reading of the Bible such passages as occur to him as suitable for sermons and profitable to his congregation. He will find some of these almost every day. In reading sermons, in visiting the sick, and engaging in other pastoral work, or in casual reading, such texts will also occur, which should be added to the list. Secondly, let him enter in another book subjects pertaining to doctrine, expository preaching, and whatever relates to his work as a pastor. He will thus have a reserved list to which he

can refer. I have found this plan to be of service to myself, though sometimes for months together I did not need to refer to the list, as subjects came up which demanded immediate attention. But occasionally I referred to it, and selected from it such texts or topics as I believed would be most profitable.

The question then arises: How long should the sermon be? No definite rule can be given. The old Scotch ministers and the Puritans used to hold communion services from early in the morning to the going down of the sun, with but slight intermission for the noon meal. The sermon was frequently two hours long. Savonarola, it is said, spoke about half an hour. Our Saviour's sermon on the Mount is not quite so long; yet it has revolutionized the world. How long St. Paul preached we do not know; but we find at Troas he spoke till midnight, and then after an interval, when he brought back to life a young man who had fallen from a window, and broke bread, he continued his speech until daybreak. I have known the opening prayer and the explanation of the hymn which was to be sung occupy, among the Covenanters of this country, a full hour and a half before the sermon commenced. In ritualistic churches the sermon is crowded into a small space, as comparatively unimportant. A distinguished French Catholic writer suggests seven minutes as the most appropriate time for the length of the sermon. On the other hand, I have listened to Cardinal Manning, in London, for nearly an hour. The average length of Protestant sermons may be stated at from thirty minutes to an hour.

The length of the sermon will vary properly with the grandeur of the theme, the necessity for a thorough explanation or illustration, and the circumstances of the congregation. The tendency with writers of sermons, especially if they must prepare two or three new sermons a week, is to make them very short. The tendency with extempore speakers is to lengthen them out almost indefinitely, especially if they find themselves in a fog while they are speaking. The result in such cases will be like that described by an old Scotch parson, who on one occasion preached a sermon three hours long. "But were you not tired?" asked a friend. "Na, na," said the parson; "but it would ha' done

your soul "good to see how tired the people were." The only safe rule is to quit before taxing the patience of the congregation so that they will be unwilling to return to the house of God. Long sermons also are a strain upon the minister who delivers them, which, if he possesses earnestness of manner, will unfit him for a protracted ministry.

The introduction should have an appropriate relation to the length of the sermon. It stands as the portico to the building, or the arched entrance or pathway to the garden. Generally, the introduction should be very brief, and should contain a simple exegesis of the text, an explanation of the context, the narration of a few incidents or illustrations, all tending to prepare the mind for the coming train of thought. If the discussion is likely to be a long one, better hasten at once to the theme. It is bad policy to waste the moments, when the congregation is able to give attention, with unimportant or trivial remarks. Challenge the thoughtfulness of the audience at once, and make them feel that you have important work on hand.

The structure of the sermon will vary according to the taste and mental habits of the individual. A man of systematic habits, of logical mental power, and little imagination, will need his divisions carefully made, to serve as steps on the stairway on which he ascends. Those of more philosophical cast of mind and possessing more imagination, will see their subjects rather in the light of a growth. There will be the seed thought, the young blade, the stalk, the leaf, the flower, the fruit, without precise division technically marked.

Whether regular divisions are made or not, it is at the pleasure of the writer or speaker whether he shall announce them at the first, or simply present them as they arise. If divisions are announced, they should be simple in character and few in number. I remember to have heard a preacher, taking as his text "Behold the Lamb of God!" announce in rapid succession twenty-four characteristics in which he was to present the subject. When he reached the twelfth, there was a look of astonishment on the faces of the audience; at the sixteenth, amazement; at the twentieth, a broad smile; and when he

reached the twenty-fourth, a suppressed titter ran throughout the whole congregation.

Whatever may be the plan adopted, the minister should evolve it out of his own thoughts, without any reference at first to commentaries or helps. The sermon will have to be his own —fashioned in the mould of his own mind, melted in the crucible of his own brain. After his plan is arranged and the outlines of the sermon formed, whether by division or simple growth, he can very properly use assistance in its development. He may then refer to commentators; or, if he should have any sermon in his library on the same topic, let him refer to that. He may refer to sketches of sermons in their outlines; but his own plan should be resolutely fixed before he ventures to consult other aids. From these sources he may obtain suggestions which will naturally join with his own train of thoughts, and thus add interest to his subject. If a scientific illustration has occurred to his mind, let him be well assured that it is clear and accurate. If he is not a master of the science, let him refer to some standard work to verify his opinion. But, as a general rule, the more fully his illustrations are drawn from common life, or from subjects within the knowledge of his congregation, the greater the power of his sermons will be. But I repeat that, before planning his sermon, he should not refer to either plans or sketches of sermons, as they may tempt him to plagiarize; or, if he depends on plans, his own power of origination will be weakened, if not destroyed. Some men thus go on crutches all their days. I have sometimes heard it said, with reference to the serious troubles of families, that in every house there is a skeleton; but, if so, every true family tries to conceal it. If the minister has skeletons, let him keep them for his own use alone, peeping only now and then into his anatomical cupboard. Let him not expose himself by attempting to exhibit them as his own construction.

The plan of the sermon being arranged, the law of invention will come to your aid. This law you have studied in mental philosophy and in rhetoric. I may not attempt its discussion

here ; yet, as it is, in my opinion, the most important mental action to produce attractive, living sermons, it is worthy of passing notice. From the earliest period of our childhood to which memory reaches we are conscious that an unbroken stream of thought—in our waking hours, at least—has been passing through our minds. This is the warp of all knowledge and progress. Into this warp we throw our shuttle, and thus form the pattern of our life-work. I have already alluded to this mental current as varying in speed and breadth in different persons. The fundamental laws we cannot change ; but, to a certain extent, our minds are machines whose movements we can in part control. Intense interest may hurry the flow ; indolence will retard it. Research and study add width to the platoon of thoughts which come abreast on the stream. By appropriate selection and intensity of recognition we retain a part, and the rest flow on forgotten. We may not drive an idea away ; but we can look so intently at another that itself hurries out of sight.

Theological invention is like other invention : it requires absorption of soul. Edison is always inventing. The phonograph, the telephone, the division of the electric light, are but samples of his work. Electrical science occupies his whole thought. He has no time to study Greek or Hebrew roots or read metaphysical literature ; he has devoted himself to natural science. Now, the true minister is a man of one Book and one work. He is intently studying how he can bring souls to Christ. He wishes to teach honesty, purity, truthfulness, and generosity ; but he has learned that the true way to teach them is by the cross—that, just as men come to Christ, as they learn to be like Him, they grow in every true merit and noble quality. Therefore, he loves to bring men to Christ ; this is his one idea. It is held as such by the consciousness of a divine call and an eternal responsibility. It becomes his dominant idea by night and by day, in public and in private. Around this central thought all other thoughts gather, whether he reads or converses, listens or looks. Every incident and every event is measured by its relation to this. Gradually other thoughts drop out of view. Attraction of association, just as really and as powerfully as attraction of gravita-

tion, controls the movement of the current. For great success the preacher cannot afford to divide his time and his energy. He cannot spend part of his time on matters wholly foreign, and then return to his pulpit with the power which he might have exercised. This intense interest or absorption of soul is the greatest power we can exercise over our thoughts. Holding, then, this one leading idea firmly and vividly in his mind, having consulted such helps as he deems best, the minister will watch the thoughts that come to him under the laws of association, and will select and retain such as he deems to be important to his subject. He sits as I have seen a spider, with his web before him, and watching until some fly has been caught and entangled. So ideas fly and light, and he secures them. It will be strange, however, if you do not think that the proper flies are long in coming.

Some persons can but secure this continuity of thought by keeping the pen in hand and watching the thoughts that gather around it. Others invent best by walking the floor or roaming in the forest. Schleiermacher made his sermons leaning out of a window. I know one man who thinks best while whittling a stick. Others I have known who thought best on horseback, and to whom the pure air of Heaven was an inspiration, while the ever-changing landscape of light and shade, mountain and valley, gave a poetic tinge to all their meditation. The old circuit system, with all its difficulties and disadvantages, had a wonderful power of inspiration, which philosophical thinkers have sometimes overlooked. Each must select for himself the system or plan which he deems best. The mode is not material, so the end is gained. One feels that he can do nothing without the "afflatus of celestial fire;" another obeys the direction of Dr. Johnson—"Sit down doggedly, sir." The latter plan is the safe one. The afflatus seldom comes at the right moment, though better work can be done under its influence; but the habit of "sitting down doggedly" will ultimately bring the "afflatus" more easily and powerfully.

While engaged in this work, the minister should frequently refer to his Bible, and all his meditation should hold as far as possible a Scripture line. Luther says of God's Word: "It

suggests more than all other commentators united." He should also compose in the spirit of prayer, feeling that, as his message is from God, nothing can be accomplished without the divine blessing. His study should have an atmosphere of prayer.

Sermons should be composed with the congregation always in view. They should be not simply discussions of subjects with inspiring rhetoric, elaborate argument, or pointed illustration; but the question should ever be present: "Will this be profitable to the congregation? Will it reach the conscience of the hardened? Will it guard the young from danger? Will it bring them to the cross of Christ? Will it solve their perplexities? Will it dispel their doubts? Will it impart comfort to the sorrowing? Will it arouse the Church to holy living and Christian activity?" With questions like these, and with a single eye to benefit his people, the minister will compose a sermon not only mainly in itself, but *specially*, suited to the needs of his people.

The sermon should always be prepared in the light of individual experience. The preacher who searches the depth of his own heart will find a fathoming line for the hearts of others. If he studies earnestly what will probe and arouse his own conscience, he will be instrumental in reaching the consciences of others. Let him notice in his own heart the character of the temptations which assail him; their insidious approach; their apparent harmony with the laws of his being; their gaining strength by indulgence, and his people will feel that he is speaking directly at them. If he uses the language of books; if he dwells on metaphysical speculations; if he uses technical terms, they will listen, confused and bewildered. But if he speaks from the workings of his own heart, and describes the struggles which actually pass within him, not unfrequently some member of his congregation will be angry, supposing that somebody has revealed to the minister his own inner life. The most effectual sermons are those drawn from the inner consciousness of the speaker. They have the freshness of life to the audience; for "as in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man."

Every sermon should have illustrations. They [are like

pictures to the eye, and help to fasten the truth in the memory. Our Saviour gave us most forcible examples of illustration of various kinds. Part of these were from history ; but, what is remarkable in His case, they were never outside of biblical or Jewish history. In biblical history we have His reference to the days of Noah, a type of the days of the Son of Man ; of Jonah preaching to the Ninevites, and of their repentance ; of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah ; the visit of the Queen of Sheba ; the glory of Solomon. We have allusions to nature—to the grain of corn falling into the earth and dying, and the new life springing therefrom ; the lilies of the field, and the growth from the mustard seed ; allusions to the sparrow in its littleness ; the hairs of our head in their number ; the redness of the evening sky as betokening fair weather, and that of the morning as foreboding a storm ; allusions to the sheep which follow the voice of the shepherd ; to the fowls of the air who are fed out of God's storehouses ; to the fox in his cunning, the wolf in his cruelty, and the dog in his sympathy ; allusions to the employments of men in their occupations ; to the farmer, in sowing his seed and gathering his harvest ; the wine-dresser, caring for the vineyard ; the traveller, going into a far country and delivering his goods to his servants ; the unfaithful steward ; the foolish rich man, who pulled down his barns to build greater ; the young man with his wealth and morality, and the beggar in his poverty and friendless death. He turns to the employments of women, and introduces the leaven hid in three measures of meal ; the careful housewife, sweeping her floor to find the lost piece of silver ; the mite of the poor widow ; the waywardness of the prodigal, and the delight of the father's heart at his return ; the wedding garment ; the alabaster box of rich perfume ; and the love that issues from hearts once sinful, but now repentant. How wide a range and at how many points the Saviour's teaching touched the life of men !

How sweeping, yet how minute his laws ! The laws of marriage and divorce ; filial obedience ; forgiveness of injuries ; fasting, prayer, and giving alms ; the duty of men to reconcile difficulties and offences ; obedience to government. His field of

view sweeps time and eternity ; embraces supreme love to God and love to man as ourselves ; finds illustration in the grave, judgment, and the resurrection ; in the fall of Jerusalem and in the end of the world ; in heaven and in hell ; in the raptures of angels and in the torments of the lost. What a field for us to copy ! If the Saviour thus illustrated His sermons, why should not we ? Parable, allegory, and metaphor were sanctioned by Him for our use.

The apostles followed the example of our Saviour, confining their illustrations to Jewish life, history, and habits, or to the great facts of bible history, with the exception of St. Paul, who, in Athens, used illustrations from Grecian poets and sculptors, and in his Epistle to Titus he makes an allusion to a Cretan author. This indicates to us that we are not confined to Jewish habits or life for our illustrations ; but we may draw them from the history and habits of the people to whom we minister. Thus the knowledge of the employments of men in our congregation may be of service in gaining influence over them. The work of the assayer of metals, the nets of the fishermen, the case of the attorney, the diseases and remedies familiar to the physician, the digging of gold in the mines, the duties of the housewife, the care of children, are so many storehouses filled with almost exhaustless stores, which may be drawn upon at will. Often have I enquired as to the preaching of some man of note who has been famous for pulpit power and success. His hearers spoke of him with enthusiasm and rapture ; but all they could remember of his sermons was his manner in the pulpit or some illustrations he had given.

The minister should never forget that preaching is destined for immediate effect. So far as the mere thought is concerned, a book is better for study than a sermon simply uttered. The preacher's message is : " *Now* is the accepted time. *Now* is the day of salvation." Whenever he preaches with the fancy that his sermon will do good some time next year he always misses the mark. It is the present impression for which sermons are preached. Ever remember, young gentlemen, that God sends people to hear you, as well as you to preach ; that your sermon

may be the last which some poor sinner may hear before he is summoned to the bar of God. Be earnest in your preaching. Say something which a poor soldier on a battle-field or a culprit on the gallows would wish to hear before dropping into eternity. Do not try to please so much as to do good.

As to style, I have no minute directions to give. Its various qualities you have already learned. I will dwell only on one point.

Use such language as your people can understand; though, while your language is simple, there is no reason why the gold in your sentences may not be burnished, nor will your steel be less strong because it is polished. You are to read in the Book of the Law, give the sense, and make the people to understand. This plainness of speech, however, must not be confounded with that which is low or trivial; much less with what is vulgar. The language of the Saviour is a heavenly model. Simple language stands in antagonism with high-sounding phrases, strings of superlatives, and rare or technical expressions. Very few persons in the congregation are acquainted with technical terms. Even theological terms are not comprehended by the masses; and hence their interest in preaching is often lost. I remember to have questioned a college class of eleven on history. The word "transmigration" was used in connection with the old Egyptians; but only one of the eleven understood the doctrine of transmigration. They knew the meaning and derivation of the Latin word; but as applied to doctrine they had no accurate conception. Yet the young theologian will talk of "transmigration" and "metempsychosis" as if every child understood him. The aim of the minister should be, as some one has said, "that the poorest old woman, sitting in a corner, may understand."

Simplicity of language also stands opposed to exaggeration. The pulpit should have a sacred regard for truthfulness of expression, as well as of fact. If the minister may exaggerate, why may not the boy? The preacher who labours after extravagance of speech is really impairing his own moral sense, and sapping the morals of his own congregation. Men of intense earnestness and vivid imaginations are especially exposed to this

danger, and the habit grows upon them. A story is told of a minister so prone to exaggeration that, after his brethren had admonished him in vain, they voted that he should be brought before the bar of the conference, and should be reprobated by the presiding bishop. The reprobation was accordingly given, and was received by the erring brother with submission and with tears. At the close he promised reform, expressed his deep sorrow for his fault, said it had cost him many a pang, and that he had shed "barrels of tears" over it.

Nor is it necessary that all parts of the sermon should be equally elaborate. Much of it may be conversational in character. The close of the sermon, however, should be marked by earnestness and force. It was said by the wise man, "The preacher sought to find out acceptable words"; and some one directs that you should close your sermon so that the hearer will say to himself: "Were I to live a hundred years, I could never forget it."

The language of the sermon should always be kind. During the preparation let the soul be filled with love. Make no concealed or sharp thrusts, intended to wound feelings or resent some fancied insult. That may be the wisdom of the serpent, but not the harmlessness of the dove. I think it is Sir Francis de Sales who says: "I would give one hundred serpents for one dove."

For some cause, literary men do not always draw the masses. Their language is too learned, or their sympathy is not apparent. It not unfrequently happens that some man of the common people—some day-labourer, perhaps—will gather around him an audience of attentive listeners, where a scholarly orator will utterly fail. The reason is that his audience understand him. His language is the language of their lives; he knows their habits of thought; he seems to sympathize with them, and their souls to him.

I call your attention to this, though I may have occasion to refer to it again, because the times require that true ministers should not only be in sympathy with the masses, but that the masses should feel that sympathy. We cannot shut our eyes to

the fact that the wall of partition is rising higher and higher between the educated and the uneducated, between the capitalist and the labourer; and there are no men who can stand in the track, none who can serve as agents of union, but the ministers of the Gospel; and on them in this country, now and for years to come, rests and will rest a fearful responsibility. No other class, I repeat, can stand between the rich and the poor, the learned and the ignorant, the virtuous and the vicious. They must follow the example of the Lord Jesus, and stoop to the lowest depths of degradation, and yet keep themselves unspotted from the world. The minister must ever give a helping hand to his brothers, and, while he looks with affection upon the wretched outcast, he also looks heavenward, whither he draws his erring brother; and while he struggles to save him from destruction, the Saviour's hand holds him, and draws him nearer to Himself. It is safe to reach with one hand to rescue the fallen sinner from the verge of hell, if with the other he can grasp the hand of omnipotent and boundless love. The office of the true minister is to stand between God and sinful man; to listen to the whispers of divine love, and repeat them in the ears of the erring, holding the cords of love, and letting them fall deeper and deeper and deeper, to reach the vilest outcast of earth, while he himself is bound by the cords of adoption to the Father's throne. How deep he may go who can tell? He may go so low that the astonished archangels shall exclaim: "Oh! the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!"

I shall never forget a certain exhibition I once attended. Shortly after schools for the imbecile were commenced in Europe, a young man, moved with benevolence, crossed the ocean to examine their mode of operation and success. Assured of their utility, he returned to this country, and commenced a similar institution. He advertised for the most idiotic and helpless children that could be found. Among those brought him was a little boy, five years of age, who had never made an intentional act, had never spoken a word, and had never given

any look of recognition to a friend. He lay on the floor, a mass of flesh, without even ability to turn himself over. Such was the student brought to this school. The teacher made effort after effort to get the slightest recognition from his eye, or to produce the slightest voluntary movement; but in vain. Unwilling, however, to yield, he had the boy brought to his room, and he laid down beside him every day for half-an-hour, hoping that some favourable indication might occur. To improve the time, he read aloud from some author. One day, at the end of six months of unavailing effort, he was unusually weary and did not read. He soon discovered that the child was uneasy, and was trying to move itself a little. The thought flashed across his mind: "It misses the sound of my voice." He brought his mouth near the child's hands, and, after repeated efforts, the little one succeeded in placing his fingers on the teacher's lips, as if to say: "Make that sound again." The teacher felt that from that moment his success was assured, and, by careful manipulation of his muscles, he soon taught the child to walk; and when I saw him, at the end of five years, he stood on the platform, recited the names of the Presidents of the United States, and answered a number of questions correctly. I looked on with astonishment, and said to myself: "Was there ever such patience and such devotion? How strong should be the love of that little boy for his teacher! Was there ever an instance of one stooping so low, and waiting so long?" Then I said: "Yes; there was one instance. The Son of God came down from Heaven; laid Himself down beside me, His great heart by my heart; watched me with perpetual care; infused into me His own life; and waited for nearly twenty years before I reached my finger to His lips, and said: "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth." What condescension! What love to fallen man! Christ stooping so low, authorizes us to stoop and wait on and wait ever. Some of these wretched ones around us have been suffering for more than eight and thirty years; have been lying at the edge of the pool, waiting for us to come and help them into the troubled waters.

Ministers vary greatly as to the time of commencing their

preparation for the ensuing Sabbath. I presume the majority commence early in the week—say on Tuesday; though I have heard of some who wrote their sermons from three to six months in advance. Such men are much more skilful than ever I was to hit the mark at so long a range. Others, while their minds are full of the subject, do not begin their immediate preparation until the day before, or sometimes only an hour or two before the time of service. It is reported of St. Augustine and Chrysostom that they sometimes selected their subjects on their way to church. I have known some ministers who spent Saturday night walking their rooms, preparing their sermons. Such ministers generally are the loudest in their complaints of “blue Mondays.” As a problem of mental philosophy, I do not pretend to solve it; but my own experience was that, when hurried in preparation, if I could fix my text firmly in my mind before Saturday night, the plan of the sermon would come to me readily on Saturday night or Sunday morning.

The mode of preparation varies. Some write out in full every word that is spoken; others the headings of the divisions; others prepare very brief notes. Robertson’s sermons, it is said, were sketched on a visiting card. Spurgeon uses simple notes. Dr. Chalmers wrote his sermons in full.

It is very seldom that a sermon can be very ably written out, as I think, of the first effort of either speaker or writer, though in a few cases it has been done. Even then previous materials have been freely used. The life may be in it; but it is frequently like the tender blade as compared with the ripe ear. It needs oftentimes recasting, always pruning, amending, or enlarging. Fenelon advises to keep the pruning-knife always in hand. I think an excellent plan of preparing sermons is to first make a simple outline. After preaching, look over and retouch that outline. Then, some weeks after, having kept the subject in mind, other ideas and illustrations having occurred, recast or amend the outline as judgment may dictate, and deliver the sermon. Again retouch, and again let it rest. And if the same process be pursued half-a-dozen times during the interval of a year or so, the sermon will have that unity and force that will

make it worthy of being written out in full and laid aside as a finished product.

A foolish prejudice exists in many minds against the repetition of a sermon. The lecturer on the platform delivers the same lecture for years. I have already referred to Wendell Phillips and his lecture on the "Lost Arts," which he has delivered for thirty years. Gough has been mimicking "Peculiar People," and Colfax has been "Across the Continent," in almost every lecture hall; yet the people admire and applaud and go and hear again. The politician goes through an entire canvass not unfrequently repeating the same subject every day. The songs of our sanctuaries are none the less sweet because they have been sung again and again. The ritualist offers the same prayers year in and year out; and even some non-ritualists observe almost the same repetition in their devotional services. I remember to have listened to a prayer in a church in New York which I greatly admired. I walked home with a friend, after service, and I spoke of the remarkable beauty and grandeur of that prayer. "Yes," my friend replied, "it is very beautiful. I have, myself, admired it for twenty years." If repetition is permitted to the medical lecturer, to the professor of law, to the platform lecturer, and to the politician, why may not the minister with great propriety repeat a discussion which has commanded his best efforts, and is on a subject of essential importance to his congregation? Dr. Chalmers, when large audiences attended his services, sometimes announced in the morning that he would repeat the same sermon in the afternoon. On one occasion when he had made that announcement Dr. Wardlaw was present, and gives us an account of the scene. It was on one Sabbath evening. The seats were occupied an hour before the time, and the doors were closed and bolted. An immense crowd was without, and as soon as Chalmers opened the vestry door, in spite of the keepers, the front door was forced open and the crowd rushed in, completely filling all the vacant space. Chalmers was grieved, and administered a sharp rebuke to the audience. Walking home with him, Chalmers said to Wardlaw: "I preached the same sermon in the

morning ; and for the very purpose of preventing the annoyance of such a densely-crowded place, I intimated that I should preach it again in the evening. Have *you* ever tried that plan?" Wardlaw says: "I did not smile. I laughed outright. 'No, no,' I replied, 'my good friend, there are but very few of us that are under the necessity of having recourse to the use of means for getting thin audiences.' " Like Dr. Wardlaw, I have never tried it ; but if ever any of you are in danger of being overwhelmed with auditors, it may be worth while to try the experiment. Never repeat a sermon because you are too indolent to make a new one.

As to sermonizing, I feel my incompetency to advise. I have never been a systematic sermonizer. I have already said to you that in my early ministry I never had any hope of becoming a successful preacher, in the sense of being an orator. In addition to this, my health was very delicate, and I didn't expect to live long. In that time there were no theological schools of the church to which I belong in this country, and no theological school of any character in the West had gained much reputation. Hence I commenced my ministry without any specific theological training. I had read my Bible from earliest childhood—indeed, I do not remember the time when I could not read—and my study of the original languages of the Bible, especially the Greek, had been for years a delightful occupation. But no one had told me how to prepare a sermon. I had listened to good preachers, but the only sermons I had ever read were those of Mr. Wesley. I did not know there was such a thing as a skeleton or a book of skeletons of sermons. In my youthful innocence, I would as soon have stolen money from a bank as to attempt to appropriate anything from a sermon which I had either heard or read. I remember an old minister once put into my hands and offered to loan me a book of sermon sketches ; but I happened to have common sense enough to decline the offer.

So I began to preach. I did not try to make sermons. I felt that I must, at the peril of my soul, persuade men to come to Christ. I must labour to the utmost of my ability to get sinners converted and believers advanced in holiness. For this

I thought, studied, wept, fasted, and prayed. My selection of texts, my plan of discourse, was only and always with the aim to persuade men to be reconciled to God. I never spoke without the deepest feeling; and unless I saw a strong divine influence on the congregation, or knew of some soul being converted, I felt sad, and sought retirement to humble myself before God in prayer. My sermons were not well arranged. Sometimes I had divisions; for I had heard ministers say *firstly*, *secondly*, and *thirdly*. Sometimes I had a line written out here and there, and sometimes a few catchwords, on a scrap of paper, which, however, I seldom took into the pulpit. My ministry was one of exhortation, rather than of sermonizing, and I looked for immediate results.

So my early ministry was formed. Whatever method I had, it was purely my own, and was adopted to bring men to God. None could have been more surprised than myself when I began to find not only that souls were awakened and converted, but that friends began to speak kindly of my simple talks as sermons. So I finished my first year. My second year I was stationed at Pittsburgh, where I was compelled to preach three times on Sunday, and at least once during the week. I was so driven it seemed as if I could not change my plans. At the end of my first year in that city I expected to be relieved; but I was disappointed, and returned to the same congregation. In addition to my preaching, I led the public prayer-meeting one evening a week, conducted two classes, took a deep interest in the Sunday-school, and formed a class of young men, whom I helped in some degree to prepare for the ministry. And so, not expecting to be a preacher, I preached on; not expecting to live, I lived on. Many a time I resolved I would prepare better; and yet I found myself brought up to Saturday evening with comparatively slight preparation for the Sabbath. But I studied intensely. I rose early and spent my forenoons in mastering theology, philosophy, and natural sciences, in which I was deeply interested. I worked on my feet, and found my sermons among the sick and the poor, in garrets and in cellars. Not expecting ever to do much in the pulpit, I spoke to men everywhere of Jesus and His love, and had

the satisfaction of seeing many scores brought to the foot of the cross. I expected by-and-by to find leisure to make better sermons; but I have never found it. My boat is on the stream, and I have been borne down the rapid current without the time to rest, until I can almost see the mouth of the river and the boundless ocean beyond. I would not advise any man to do what I have done. I would breathe into you the devotion of my early ministry; but I would urge you to make better preparation, and become a workman more approved both by God and man.



VI.

THE DELIVERY OF THE SERMON.

In the composition of a sermon the collection of material evinces the diligent student. Broad and comprehensive thoughts reveal the great thinker ; clear, beautiful, and forcible language manifests the cultured writer ; but only in the delivery of the sermon does the true preacher appear. His throne is the pulpit ; he stands in Christ's stead ; his message is the Word of God ; around him are immortal souls ; the Saviour unseen is beside him ; the Holy Spirit broods over the congregation ; angels gaze upon the scene ; and Heaven and hell await the issue. What associations and what vast responsibility !

The sermon, considered simply as matter, might be contained in an essay or a book ; that which constitutes it preaching is the appearance, utterance, and action of a living preacher. It is different from the ordinary lecture or oration by the message being divine, and the speaker having been sent of God ; and from the theological essay or the published sermon by the presence and influence of the speaker. The Word of God is the constant quantity ; the preacher the variable.

If this be true, then that preaching is best which, on the one hand, is most full of the divine message, and which, on the other hand, has the greatest personality of the preacher. The speaker employs not only the truth, but the utmost powers of utterance, intonation, countenance, and gesticulation. I think Dr. Dick first suggested that the time might come when the preacher could sit in his study, and, by means of tubes properly arranged, could address a distant congregation. A similar use has been suggested for the phonograph. While either of these processes would convey the sound to the ear, the accent and intonation of

the speaker, who does not feel that by such a process the chief power and influence of the pulpit would be lost? Were not the presence of the preacher necessary, God could have employed the ministry of angels, or each person might have been addressed by a visionary voice. The ordination of God requires that preaching should be by a man of like passions and sympathies with other men. He stands as a witness and illustration of the influence of divine power. As he knows the truth of the Gospel, others may know it; as he has felt the power of the Gospel, others may feel it also. He tells them how he was moved; out of how deep a pit he was drawn; how his feet have been placed on the Rock of Ages; how he repented and believed; how he was delivered from temptation; how he is now filled with power to resist the allurements and temptations that once took him captive; how that once he was influenced only by the visible and earthly, and that now he is under the sweet attraction of the unseen and heavenly. If, therefore, the personality of the preacher be so necessary and potent a factor, what manner of person should the minister be in all holy conversation and godliness? He should resemble Stephen, "full of faith and the Holy Ghost." He should be able to say, with Paul: "Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblamably we behaved ourselves among you that believed."

There are four different methods of delivering a sermon, each of which has in its favour the authority of eminent names and conspicuous examples. First, reading in the pulpit from a copy previously prepared; secondly, reciting from memory a sermon which has been committed; thirdly, using notes, more or less copious, which are read or referred to in the pulpit, and to which may be added such illustrations and amplifications as may occur to the mind at the moment, or which may have been more or less premeditated; fourthly, speaking directly to the audience without relying on any verbal preparation. These various methods may be and frequently are partially intermingled. The reader who becomes enthused may pass over pages of manuscript, reciting from memory, or so permeated with his subject that he ventures to vary from the language before him. So the extem-

pore speaker frequently quotes from memory Scripture texts, or phrases, or lines of poetry, or he may read an extract from some author, or a paragraph of statistics.

Reading secures to the preacher self-possession. He knows that he has his sermon prepared, and, consequently, has no burden upon his memory or imagination. Nor will the presence or absence of any person in his congregation either annoy or confuse him. He has nothing to do but simply to read what he has written. He is confident of the accuracy of his language and the strength of his logic. He had time to revise and change while the pen was in his hand. Some ministers labour under the apprehension that if they speak extemporaneously they may forget the intended points of their sermon, or, in the excitement of speaking, may omit some necessary link in the argument. To others language comes slowly, and, under the hesitancy, utterance becomes difficult. So some men of fine culture and mental strength feel themselves inadequate to the task of preaching without manuscript. Others prepare written sermons that definition may be more precise, and for purposes of controversy. There the preparation of the manuscript is undoubtedly of valuable service. But, while admitting the force of these statements, yet it seems to me that the advantages are not so great as the disadvantages. In reading closely, little of the preacher's personal power, except his voice, is added to the written words. Even that is restrained, as the reading voice is not so full as the speaking one. The power of the eye, the play of the features, the light of the countenance, and the freedom of movement, are either lost to the audience, or greatly restricted.

This personal power being the great factor in preaching, whatever impairs it inevitably weakens the impression of the sermon. It is said that the minister ought not to read closely; that the eye need not follow the manuscript, except now and then; that the preacher can remember much of his sermon, and that he can commit it without much labour. This is true. But if so, it indicates that the free delivery is better than reading. If a man excels as a reader when he seldom looks at his manuscript, would it not be *Excelsior* not to look at all? Is it not

the true mark of a good reader that he reads as if he were speaking? But is it ever considered a compliment to a speaker that he speaks as if he were reading? Those who recite from memory do so sometimes appear; but it is ever considered a blemish. If we consider the advantages carefully, we shall find that they inure to the preacher, rather than to his hearers. If, after he has written an argument, and has thus familiarized himself with it, he cannot remember its various links, is it probable that the people will remember it who hear it for the first time as he reads? If the points of his sermons are so feebly connected that, after studying and writing, he cannot recall them in the proper order, is the order very material? If he is not interested enough in the message which God sends through him, is it necessary to interest the people? Nor is reading necessary for accurate definition. Does the professor in the lecture room read his definitions? It is said he is familiar with them. So should the minister be with definitions in theology. If the minister cannot trust to his memory for his definitions, will they be easily apprehended by his people? As to controversial sermons, the less of them the better, as a general rule. I do not object to doctrinal preaching; but I think it is seldom necessary to preach in a controversial style. Mr. Wesley, who lived in a time of great agitation, said that out of eight hundred sermons which he preached in a year, there were not more than eight of a controversial character.

The use of notes is less objectionable in these respects than the written sermon. They may refresh the memory in case of confusion of thought, and may impart confidence for the time without withdrawing the attention of the speaker very greatly from the audience; yet it would be much better to have the notes thoroughly written on the heart. If notes be used, the heads of the discourse may be read, and the extemporizing may be greater or less according to the occasion or the ability of the speaker.

Reciting from memory, if the sermon has been well committed, is not unpleasant to the hearer, as the preacher may have full play for all his powers. This form of delivery, however, for

ministers of ordinary memory, imposes a slavish service. Time is thus spent which should be given to study or pastoral work.

It is objected to extempore delivery that the language is oftentimes inaccurate; that the words are ill-chosen; that the thoughts are often incoherent, and the whole performance is crude. Undoubtedly this is sometimes the case; but there may be extempore writing, as well as extempore speaking. Once for all, let me say that extempore speaking—or direct address, as I prefer to call it—does not preclude the most thorough preparation. It may be abused by ignorant and indolent men; but it is not designed to diminish the necessity for extensive reading and careful thought. The order of the parts of the discourse should be clearly fixed in the mind; illustration may be selected and arrayed; suitable language for certain portions may be selected; yet at the time of delivery, with the heart full of the subject and with the outlines clearly presented, let the speaker rely on his general knowledge and his habit of speaking for the precise words which he may need. If he be deeply in earnest, he will, as he proceeds, feel a glow of enthusiasm which will give warmth and vigour to his expressions. The disadvantages connected with the use of written sermons may be in part obviated if the preacher writes as if he looked his people in the face and measured the momentous results connected with the sermon. Yet there is a greater power in the actual presence of the living hearers waiting for the bread of life, and whose eyes and countenances respond to the words of the speaker.

It is said that critical audiences greatly prefer the finished written discourse, and they are not satisfied with extempore delivery. There may be a few such congregations; but are they not found chiefly among those who reject evangelical doctrines, who attend service to be delighted rather than edified, and who say: “Prophesy unto us smooth things”?

It may always be admitted that where sermons are delivered simply for instruction, reading may not only be allowable, but even preferable: yet persuasion, rather than instruction, is the great aim of preaching. In the lecture-room, in the study of science, reading is highly profitable; and, yet, who that ever

heard Agassiz did not admire the freedom and delightful familiar style in which he discoursed concerning the highest truths and most wonderful phenomena of natural science?

It may also be admitted that audiences composed mainly of students, or of those whose minds have long been disciplined by educational processes, may be greatly blessed or profited by reading sermons. But there are few congregations where men of thorough educational culture are in the majority. The larger, though uncultured class, demands the greatest attention from the minister. It is a law of Nature that heated air always ascends, but never descends. A fire may be built upon the ice without having much effect upon it. So all reforms begin with the masses. In the time of Christ it was asked if any of the rulers believed on Him; yet the common people heard Him gladly. In the Reformation, during the sixteenth century, the reformers rallied around the standard of Luther and his coadjutors in great numbers; while Erasmus, though aiding the work of the Reformation by his Greek Testament, and though he detested the monks, yet feared to break with Rome, and declined to unite with the reformers. If ministers expect great success, they must tread in the footsteps of the great masters, and throw themselves fearlessly upon the sympathies of the people. Yet I incline to the opinion that men of the highest culture enjoy an earnest extempore delivery, if the matter is of a high and elevated character. Dr. Franklin said he would go twenty miles to hear Whitefield.

We are sometimes told that many of the most distinguished ministers have read their sermons. There are others that do so still. Yet the number is comparatively small, when contrasted with those who do not read. Perhaps no example is more frequently quoted than that of Dr. Chalmers as one who read his sermons; and yet his great power was most conspicuously displayed when he left his manuscript and uttered his thoughts in the most impassioned style. Dr. Hanna says the interest in his lectures was sometimes deepened by some extempore addition or illustration, when the lecturer would spring upon his feet, and, bending over his desk, through thick and stammering utterance,

find his way to some picturesque expression or forcible phraseology, which shed a flood of light upon the subject in hand. It was almost impossible in such a singular class-room to check the burst of applause or restrain the merriment. Of his pulpit efforts a writer in the *British Quarterly Review* says: "Dr. Chalmers on great occasions was absolutely terrible. His heavy frame was convulsed; his face was flushed; the veins in his forehead and neck stood out like whicrcords: the foam flew from his mouth in flakes; he hung over his audience menacing them with his shaking fist; or he stood erect, maniacal and staring." No wonder that a Scotch lady, speaking of his manner of delivering his sermons, said it was "reading with a pith in it." Such delivery comes probably under direct address. Probably in four cases out of five of those who read sermons their great power is just in that part which they do not read.

The voice of antiquity is almost unanimous in favour of the direct address, from the time when Miriam raised her song of joy on the banks of the Red Sea to the close of the prophecy of Malachi. The prophets sent of God used to speak directly to the people. In the New Testament record there is not a single instance given of an address being read. The blessed Saviour, the only perfect model, spoke as never man spake. The apostles and their associates followed His example, preaching the Gospel with all boldness. Nor have we any historic evidence of sermons being read for the first four centuries. We know that Saints Ambrose, Jerome, Chrysostom, and Augustine spoke without any notes, though very probably they sometimes prepared them. The Roman Catholic Church has pursued the same method, almost without change. Bossuet, Bourdillon, Massillon, and others preached in the same style. The author of a work on "Sacred Eloquence," which is endorsed by Cardinals Cullen and Newman, says: "In no sense of the word can reading be called preaching. A sermon is, of its very nature, a persuasive oration. In real preaching one man speaks to another." The same is true of the Greek Church, though in the midst of its ceremonies the sermon is almost neglected. These two sects embrace nearly three-fourths of Christendom. During the Protestant Reformation none of the

great leaders read their sermons ; but in England the practice was often adopted. Among the Protestants of Europe reading is seldom practised, except in England and Scotland. Even there such men as Spurgeon, Newman Hall, Parker, and others who have gathered together large congregations, speak without manuscript. So also do the Wesleyans and Baptists generally. In this country practice is divided. Revivalists everywhere use direct address. So also the great majority of the ablest pulpit speakers in the land. Some of them write and commit ; others preach without any memorizing ; but the great majority of able speakers who use direct address, after previous preparation, rely on the inspiration of the moment and their power of language for the precise words to be employed. As services become ritualistic the sermon is more frequently read.

In other callings men use this form of direct address continually. The attorney never reads a plea for the life of his client before the jury ; the politician on the platform—or, as we say out West, “on the stump”—never reads a speech ; the general who addresses an army before going into battle never reads his address ; and yet what a powerful effect their few words sometimes have !

I would, therefore, most earnestly advise every young man to cultivate the habit of extempore or direct address. It will give him more influence and more power over his audience. Under the excitement of direct address some of the most beautiful imagery, as well as the most forcible expressions, occur to the mind. The reaction of the congregation is also secured. The faces of his audience will oftentimes afford suggestive thoughts, and he can skilfully vary the length of different parts of his discourse accordingly. While I, however, greatly prefer the direct address, yet each must decide for himself, as no absolute and universal rule can be enjoined.

As to directions for reading sermons properly, I confess frankly my inability to give them. In forty-five years of ministry I have never attempted to read a sermon. A few Sabbath-afternoon lectures to college students and some general lectures comprise the whole of my experience in that direction. In the early years

of my ministry I wrote and committed two sermons, which I delivered without difficulty. So even in that I am a novice. Notes I have occasionally, though seldom, used. While I bow at the feet of many distinguished men who read, and who read ably, yet, if I must give any advice as to the style of reading sermons, I should follow the example of *Punch*, who addressed a piece of advice to those contemplating matrimony. It read as follows: "Advice to those about to get married: *Don't!*"

To attain the highest power of direct address, practice is absolutely essential. If I am asked how and when you shall begin, I answer: The first time you preach, and, if practicable, before a small audience. There is certainly some risk; but don't stand shivering on the bank, but plunge in at once. Gilbert Stuart, in answer to a question as to how artists are to commence their studies, said: "Just as puppies are taught to swim. Chuck them in."

In the appearance and manner of the minister in entering the pulpit everything careless or offensive must be avoided. He must have a due regard for his congregation and a proper sense of conventional propriety. He must avoid all affectation of manner and all appearance of display. An air of indifference shows his utter incompetency. The most able speaker feels a vast responsibility in addressing an audience. Much more the minister, upon whose words the destiny of souls may depend. The most earnest minister trembles at the responsibility of his task, and yields only under a conviction of the divine call. Luther said: "Although I am old and experienced in speaking, I tremble whenever I ascend the pulpit." Gregory Nazianzen speaks of the "tempest of spirits" which the minister experiences. I have known many a minister who trembled so greatly that with difficulty he ascended the pulpit steps.

Nor is this mental pressure wholly unprofitable. It leads the minister to a sense of his own weakness and helplessness without divine aid. It also gives him a stimulus that will enable him to speak in a livelier strain and with more spiritual power. Leaning on the Divine Arm, he will have less regard for the *opinions* of certain persons in his congregation.

The proper management of the voice is of great importance. The preacher should aim to speak with sufficient force to be heard distinctly by all the audience. To do this successfully, if the congregation be large, let him select some person about two-thirds of the distance between him and the rear of the church, and let him endeavour to speak so as to be distinctly heard by that person. Probably all in the assembly will then hear, though those the most remote will have to be more attentive. Better let there be a slight lowering of the voice in the first few sentences than that the voice should break from being overstrained. This precaution is necessary only in large audiences. In ordinary churches the force employed should be sufficient to fill the entire room. Care should be taken that the pitch is as near as possible that of the ordinary tone of conversation. This is essential to prevent injury to the vocal organs, and that monotonous utterance which becomes very unpleasant to the listeners. This ordinary pitch, that varies above and below, gives a mark of naturalness. Distinctness of syllabic utterance imparts the quality termed penetration. The voice should always be in harmony with the subject, and should indicate the earnest love, the deep sympathy, and the ardent zeal of the preacher. It is sometimes called the sympathetic voice. The preacher stands as if forgetting himself, and tries to bring about a perfect union of the subject and the hearers. The loudness of the voice will vary with the physical force of the speaker. Whitefield's voice had such penetrative power that it could be heard across the Delaware River.

In varying the tones of the voice the free use of the muscles of the throat and neck is very important. For this purpose the proper movement of the whole body will assist. It is a law of our system that one set of muscles continually employed become wearied and oftentimes painful, from the superabundance of blood which flows to them. This is shown in the weariness attending the climbing of towers or mountains and in the wielding of the sickle in the harvest-field. This is the chief reason why the voice tires more readily in reading than in speaking. The book being held in one position strains to some extent the vocal organs.

cannot read aloud at night without weariness as well as I can during the day. In the daytime the posture of the body is easily changed and the light is diffused all around; but in reading by gas or candle-light the book must be held in one position, and consequently the posture is more constrained. In the pulpit more force must be exercised than in ordinary reading. The tension of the muscles is greater, the flow of blood is more abundant, and consequently the danger from a constrained posture is greatly increased. Political speakers and attorneys move their whole body when speaking; and, hence, their throats seldom suffer. If you notice those men who gesticulate freely, or who move from place to place on the platform, you find that they talk both long and loud without danger of injury. On the other hand, those who confine themselves to one posture are much more liable to be affected with bronchitis. Indeed, I think I can give you an excellent receipt for acquiring this disease. First, write all your sermons in a close, confined hand, which may be difficult to read. Secondly, place them on a pulpit so that you will be obliged to incline the face toward the manuscript, and to keep one finger following the lines, lest you lose the place. Then with the other hand attempt to gesticulate, keeping the eye on the page all the while; and, my word for it, you will have a first-rate case of clerical bronchitis in less than six months. If you can so forget yourself that you can throw yourself with your thoughts into the very face and eyes of the congregation, or stand erect, or move like the very spirit of the storm, you may read without injury.

Practising, if properly practised, so far from being injurious to the voice, is invigorating and strengthening. If the voice is used without straining, the more frequently it is used the better. Calvin, who was very animated in delivering his addresses, sermons, and lectures, spoke daily. Luther spoke about as frequently. Wesley, who was calm and quiet, though earnest, in the pulpit, in a protracted ministry of over fifty years preached as many as 14,000 times. Whitefield, who was a perfect tempest in the pulpit, is said to have preached about 18,000 sermons. It is unquestionably true that some men, by their unwise and unnecessary vehemence, do injury to their vocal powers. The

vehemence of some speakers is really a hindrance to their success. Cicero, when a young man, strained his voice, and his friends advised him to abandon his profession. Instead of this, however, he travelled abroad, conversed with the best speakers, learned to restrain his hasty utterance and his impetuosity of manner, and returned to his country to take his place as one of the leading orators of his age. Dr. Durbin commenced his ministry in Kentucky, and so earnest was he in his manner that in a few months his voice gave way. His desire to do good was so intense, however, that, when scarcely able to more than whisper, he would visit his people, and, sitting down by their firesides, talk to them of Jesus or explain to them the way of salvation. In this quiet work his voice gradually recovered, and it gave him that peculiar manner which served as a background to those inimitable bursts of oratory which for long years made his name second to none in the American pulpit.

The eye also has an immense influence over the congregation. It often speaks the feelings of the speaker better than words. People are anxious not only to hear, but to see the preacher; and this power of the eye is one of the great elements of oratory. I have known some eminent ministers who looked above the heads of their congregation, as if they were examining the structure of the ceiling; and others who kept their eyes closed, or nearly so, during the great part of the sermon. In every case their power over the audience was diminished by that fact. The true orator looks at the congregation, though sometimes he is for the moment oblivious to anything that may occur; but still his look is toward his audience, his thoughts are directed to them, and, in spite of his powers being all absorbed, a mental and spiritual communion is maintained between the speaker and his congregation.

The value of earnestness cannot be too strongly stated. St. Augustine says: "It is more by the Christian fervor of his sermons than by any endowment of his intellect that the minister must hope to inform the understanding, reach the affections, and bend the will of his hearers." In various ages, men have appeared who by their earnestness have aroused whole cities, and even nations, to activity. This earnestness must appear in every step

of the sermon—earnestness in reading, earnestness in writing, earnestness in prayer, earnestness in clearness and distinctness and force of enunciation in managing the vocal organs, earnestness in addressing the congregation, earnestness in view of the immense issues at stake. A mother is in earnest when she pleads with her wayward boy. A father is in earnest when from his dying bed he gives his last message to his weeping children. The preachers who have been remarkable for this quality have so influenced their congregations, that they have felt and sympathized with their deep earnestness of spirit.

The two great requisites for extempore speaking are a command of language and self-possession. This command of language may be best gained in two ways: first, by the practice of translating aloud, especially the reading of a work, in company, written in some foreign language. This was recommended strongly by Pitt and Macaulay, and has, in some form, been practised by many eminent writers and speakers. Dr. Franklin was accustomed to read one of Addison's essays, and, holding the ideas in his mind, to write them out in his own language, and then compare what he had written with the original. Without any design as to influence on my future life, I acquired the habit, when a youth, of reading aloud to my friends from books in any language that I was studying. Passages which I found to be either very beautiful or very interesting were selected. Especially was this the case with the writings of Xenophon, the orations of Demosthenes, Virgil's "Æneid," and Fenelon's "Telemachus." It was also my practice to read in family worship from the original language of the Bible. This practice, though not adopted for that purpose, gave me a greater command of the language; but it may not have made me quite so familiar with the idiomatic structure of other languages. At least, I never advanced as far as the sophomore who, descanting upon the subject of Latin, said he could think better in Latin. I confess that during all my life my thinking has been in English. Another method is to hold personal religious conversation with individuals. The process of explaining to one attentive mind some passage of *Scripture*, presenting some motive or urging to action, imparts a

readiness of language which will be of great service in the pulpit. There is philosophy, as well as piety, in visiting those who are sick and in prison, and in going out into the highways and hedges and compelling men to come to the feast of love.

To acquire choiceness and beauty of language, some have recommended the reading of some poet who has written on religious themes—such as Milton—for half-an-hour before entering the pulpit. I would greatly prefer, however, spending that period in reading the words of Jesus or of the inspired penmen.

Self-possession can best be gained by having the mind filled with thoughts of the wonderful message about to be delivered and the responsibility connected with it. If one feels that God is present, and that the words are spoken for Him, the timidity arising from the presence of the audience will vanish. It is well, also, not to keep in mind the distinguished men who may chance to be present, but to speak for the benefit of the masses. Luther said he did not speak for the doctors or the professors, but for the mass of the working-people who were before him. Young men are prone to ask themselves: "What will this doctor or that judge or this professor say?" Their preaching will almost insensibly be formed to gain their approval. Now let me whisper to you two things, young gentlemen. First, as a general rule, distinguished politicians are very poor judges of preaching. They study almost everything else more than their Bibles. Like a former governor of Texas, who, congratulating the legislature upon the hopeful prospect before the country, said: "To use the language of Scripture, 'Now is the winter of our discontent made glorious by the summer's sun.'" The other thing I would whisper to you is this: The most learned and distinguished men, especially in theology, are the most lenient critics. If your aim is to do good, you will have no kindlier hearers. They know the difficulties of speaking, and are ready to make every proper allowance. They do not expect you to make sermons for them. So far as captious and unkind criticism is concerned, I would much rather speak before your faculty than before a class of recently initiated freshmen.

You will never attain to full self-possession in the pulpit.

without thorough self-abnegation. You must lose sight of yourself. You must become absorbed in your glorious work for Christ. You must remember that you are polishing gems for Him ; that you are building a temple for His glory. This intensity of feeling, this conception of the grandeur of your work, will make your memory more attentive and yourself less prominent.

The question then arises : “ Shall not the mind be occupied with choice of words while speaking ? ” I answer : Not directly. The words will come in the height of your intense feeling ; but they will be the result of your previous discipline. If you should chance to stumble, do not go back ; but press on, following Whitefield’s rule—“ never to correct anything unless it was wicked.”

The same in regard to gesticulation. Never try to make a gesture. Those only are natural which come of themselves. The man who is full of the subject, whose heart is burning for utterance, if his feelings are not restrained, will generally gesticulate earnestly. In gesticulation, also, the discipline must be preparatory. Elocution should be studied previously ; but no thought should be bestowed upon it at the moment. I know we are told that actors study every word, and practise every gesture before a glass ; and why should not the minister ? The difference is, the minister is original. He gives expression in his own words, and to his own feelings. He has simply to be true to himself. The actor is not thinking of himself. He has no thoughts and no feelings of his own. He familiarizes himself with the thoughts of others through their words, and he imitates the expression of their feelings through his actions. His highest glory is to speak and act just as they are supposed to have spoken and acted. All his study and all his preparation bring him just to the point where the minister starts, if his heart be full of his subject and if he feels his deep responsibility. While I earnestly recommend the study of elocution as a preparatory discipline, I once more caution you against imitation. Improve your own voice, and do not try to imitate the voice of another. I have known some young ministers who have lost their sprightliness

and vigour of utterance in attempting to acquire a deep, sonorous kind of utterance. Students from different schools of theology, colleges, and universities can frequently be distinguished from each other by the manner of intonation acquired in their elocutionary exercises.

For myself, I never had any difficulty in finding suitable language to express my thoughts. My great anxiety to reach some hearts early led me to brave, in great measure, the presence of men of superior intellect and commanding position. My voice seemed in every way unfit for public speaking. It was weak, and the pitch was high. By close application to study I had become stooped. My lungs were weak, and I was troubled with a cough. I wore plasters for years, and many of my friends feared that I was going into consumption. I spoke because I felt that I must speak. At the end of my first year my physician urged me to desist from preaching. I was junior preacher on a circuit, in which I preached twenty-eight times to the round. I took up also six additional appointments, making thirty-four. One of these appointments was in a small village, and was in the sitting-room of a house belonging to a humble widow. It would not seat more than twenty people. On my second and last visit to that place, I was informed that a physician there, who was an infidel, desired to see me, as he thought he might be of some service by directing me as to my health. I called, and he said he had heard that I was in feeble health, and gave me some simple suggestions. I was pleased with his general advice, and at the close of the interview I asked him in regard to my continuing to preach. He answered that as to the religious question he had nothing to say; but simply as a physician, he would recommend me to ride eight or ten miles and preach once every day. The suggestion harmonized with my own feelings, and I resolved to follow it; and the only request I ever made for any appointment was that, on account of my weak lungs, I might be placed where I could ride eight or ten miles and preach once every day. My presiding elder promised me his full concurrence and heartiest support; but I was sent to the city of Pittsburgh, *with its smoke and dust, right in the midst of the time when*

the Asiatic cholera was prevailing there. My friends were alarmed at my going there ; but I went. My health was preserved by careful attention to food and exercise, and by keeping regular hours. My voice gradually strengthened, and, though never musical, I acquired the power to address the largest audiences. My conviction to-day is that if I had not continued to preach I should, in all probability, have fallen an early victim to bronchial or pulmonary disease. Often, when called to face danger, that passage has seemed to ring in my ears : "He that will save his life shall lose it ; and he that will lose his life for My sake, the same shall save it."



VII.

MINISTERIAL POWER.

PREACHERS differ greatly not only in the matter and manner of their sermons, but also in the results which are achieved. This is especially true in the reformation and conversion of souls, and in the upbuilding of the Redeemer's kingdom. The element which gives success is termed *ministerial power*. It is so subtle and spiritual in its character as to be beyond the reach of clear definition or explanation. The term, however, is scriptural, and, though somewhat indefinite, we have nothing more expressive. It is that without which sermonizing is almost useless, and for which every young minister should most sincerely and earnestly strive.

St. Paul declares the Gospel to be "the power of God unto salvation," evidently using the phrase as in contrast with the sovereignty and power of Rome, then the greatest nation in the world. It is a system of power because of the influence which it exercises, not only on the heart and lives of men, but also on the growth and destiny of nations. The apostle speaks of this power as being present in his ministry when he says: "Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily," or "with power." This was compared to the power which raised the Lord Jesus from the dead; and the apostle says: "Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

The word "power," as used in our English version, is represented in the Greek Testament by several distinct words. One

of these is *κρατος*, which signifies strength or the manifestation of physical force. The two chief forms, however, are *ἐξουσία* and *δύναμις*. The first of these indicates authority as exercised by a ruler, and seems to intimate official privilege or prerogative. Thus, "all power is given unto me in Heaven and in earth." "To them gave He power to become the sons of God." Christ gave His disciples "power over unclean spirits, and to heal all manner of sickness. These official prerogatives and their miraculous endowments are in all cases expressed by the word *ἐξουσία*, though in a few cases *δύναμις* is joined with it. Ministerial power is everywhere expressed by the word *δύναμις*, as at the close of St. Luke's Gospel. "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high." The same word is used in describing the pentecostal scene, and is employed by the apostle to express the spiritual power of the ministry; as, "God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind;" and "My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power." So, too, he says: "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God." The word thus employed indicates a power bestowed upon the individual as a divine gift, not for his own edification merely or chiefly, but as a force working through him in the hearts of others.

If I may use the phrase, this ministerial power is a moral dynamite, entrusted with the minister and, to a certain extent, with all working Christians. It is superadded to every personal and religious experience. This was emphatically true of the apostles. Three years they had been with Christ. They had seen His spirit and heard His teaching. Some of them had been with Him on the Mount of Transfiguration, and had beheld His glory. They had been placed in the apostleship and had received the gift of working miracles; and yet they were told to wait for power from on high.

This power, then, is not synonymous with conversion. Jesus had recognized the disciples not as servants, but as friends. He had chosen them out of the world, and had comforted them with

the assurance of His richest blessing. Although they had forsaken Him in an hour of terror and had fled, they were not forgotten by Him. He came to them in an upper room in demonstration of love, showed unto them His hands and His side, and said : "Peace be unto you." These words of peace had the accents of forgiving love ; and who can doubt that, being justified by faith, they had peace with God ? More than this, He breathed on them, and said : "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." Who could desire more for his own experience than to feel the breath of the triumphant Saviour, and to receive the indwelling of the Holy Ghost ?

Nor is it the same with the highest possible condition of religious joy. They were glad when they saw the Lord. Even the last doubts had been dispelled from the heart of Thomas. For forty days they had frequently seen Jesus. They had heard Him speak of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God. They saw Him ascend from Mount Olivet to glory, and angels spoke to them of His coming again. Could they be happier ? The cross, the agony, the sepulchre, have all vanished. An ascending Saviour, a cloud of glory, angelic promises are in their stead. Then "they worshipped Him, and return to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God." What supreme bliss ! And yet it is not ministerial power.

Nor is it a call or commission to preach the Gospel that they had previously received. After His resurrection He said to His disciples : "As the Father hath sent Me, even so send I you" ; and before His ascension He uttered the great commission : "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel unto every creature." And yet, with this rich experience, and this grand commission, the direction comes : "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high."

If we endeavour to analyze the elements of this power in itself I think we shall fail. It is spiritual and invisible. All we can do is to trace the circumstances under which the power is given and the results which flow from it. Indeed, power is in its *nature indescribable*. It is known simply by its results.

Gravitation, that greatest of all material powers, constantly active, everywhere potent, is wholly beyond our research or even our conception. Where are those cords, stronger than steel, which bind the planets to their centres? Where are those unseen ties that, like a universal network, involve every atom in the air and make it fall to the earth; and not merely to the earth, but in a direct line toward the centre of the earth, though it be thousands of miles away, and can never be reached? It seems to me an emblem of God, filling all space, operating through all matter. If the dream of astronomers be true, that not only secondaries move around their planets, and planets their suns, but that suns revolve about the centres of immense systems, and all these systems move around one great centre, who can conceive the magnitude of a force that can thus operate through infinite space with precisely the same law of attraction for vast worlds as for infinitesimal atoms? It is a force never seen, and yet it operates in the sunshine and the dark. It is never heard, but it sends these myriads of worlds singing and shining on their way. He who made that power by the word of His Spirit, gives that Spirit to work in us and through us.

Nor is it the only exhibition of power. Consider the chemical affinity that draws together the acids and alkalies. Think of the magnetic power which makes the steel filings, though in the midst of dust and rubbish and clippings of tin and brass, leave them all and fly up and kiss the magnet. It touches the pivoted needle, and men and treasures are secure upon the stormy ocean by its unerring guidance. The winds blow ever so fiercely; the waves roll ever so furiously; the vessel pitches as though it would founder; and yet that strange influence, unseen, unheard, unfelt, holds the needle in its place. Who can tell what is power? We see it in its effects; we measure it in its results.

So with spiritual power. We cannot tell "whence it cometh nor whither it goeth"; but it breathes upon the human spirit, and stormy passions subside, falsehood, fraud, lust, and avarice *disappear*, and truth, purity, meekness, and love reign supreme *in the soul*. It is a transmutation beyond what the philosopher

sought in the fabled stone whose touch should turn everything into gold. It is a new creation from the breath of Him who created all worlds and breathed into all spirits.

Spiritual power is not beauty of presence nor dignity of form. It is not learning, nor rhetoric, nor logic, nor oratory; but it can use all these for its one great end. It can burn and shine in the highest powers of the most eloquent speaker, and it can thrill in the accents of the unlettered man. It can infuse the words that drop from a mother's lips, and it can wing the lispings of a little child. It can use all there is of a human being for the glory of God and for the advancement of His Church.

This spiritual force in its highest human manifestation is ministerial power. It employs and utilizes all other forces as its agents. It uses the power of thought, which is immense in its character—thoughts not only of men, but of angels and of God; thoughts which were from eternity and thoughts which shall triumph when earth's history shall have closed. It uses the power of language in all its manifold forms. Its tongue of fire is to preach among all nations, to carry to every heart the knowledge of the power and love of God. It employs oratory in its highest efficiency; and how great is that influence which man may exercise over his fellow men! Listen to the eloquence of Demosthenes, as he stirred the people of Athens, as the sea is stirred by a storm, with his wonderful philippics. See how Cicero moved the Roman Senate and people. Look at Peter the Hermit rousing all Europe in the time of the Crusades. Witness the eloquence which Fox, Pitt, Sheridan, and Burke, displayed in the British Parliament. What a power Napoleon exercised over his soldiers by his short, fiery speeches, as he pointed to the enemy on the battle-fields of Europe, or called them to remember how forty centuries looked down at them from the top of the Pyramids of Egypt. If there be, as is claimed by some, a magnetic power which kindles in the eye, and sparkles responsively from the speaker to the hearer, and from the hearer to the speaker; if there be some subtle current established between them which is manifested in the energy of

the speaker, and the rapt attention of the hearer—an indescribable force flowing in some way from the intensity of a soul speaking to other souls—that power is subservient to the true and faithful minister.

In examining this promise of power from on high, its first characteristic is that it proceeds from the Father. Jesus said, “Behold I send the promise of My Father upon you”; and, again, “Wait for the promise of the Father which ye have heard of Me.” Why was it called “the promise of the Father”? One reason, doubtless, was that it had been foretold by Isaiah and Joel, before the coming of Christ. Another reason was that when Christ promised the Comforter He said, “Whom the Father shall send in My name”; and, again, “Which proceedeth from the Father.” Just at this point arises the great *filioque* question, which has divided the Eastern and Western Churches, but which I will not stop to notice. The expression may also indicate the wonderful works to be wrought under the Gospel dispensation.

The power from on high was to be a power like that occasionally seen in ancient times. Indeed, the Old Testament is largely a revelation of the power of God, as displayed among many classes of people and in a great variety of instances. The call and preservation of Abraham, the deliverance of the Israelites, their preservation in the wilderness, their entrance into Canaan, and their subsequent history abound with wonderful displays of the power of God among the highest and the lowest, princes and subjects, prophets and priests, men and women, in every employment of life. Among these wonderful exhibitions those connected with worship have the greatest interest. The word of the Lord on Mount Sinai made the people quake and fear. When the tabernacle was set up and the offerings were placed upon the altar “there came a fire out from before the Lord and consumed upon the altar the burnt-offering and the fat; which when all the people saw they shouted and fell on their faces.” So, when Solomon had finished the Temple and the sacrifice was set in order a fire came down and consumed the burnt-offering and the sacrifice. And when all the people saw how the fire

came down and the glory of the Lord filled the house, they bowed themselves with their faces toward the ground and worshipped and praised the Lord, saying: "For He is good. For His mercy endureth for ever." So, when upon Mount Carmel, at the prayer of Elijah, the fire of the Lord consumed the burnt sacrifice, the wood, the stones, the dust, and the water, the people fell on their faces and said: "The Lord, He is the God! The Lord, He is the God!" Under the influence of such a scene, the people took the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and slew them before the face of Ahab, who had been their friend and protector. The revelation of the Father was thus one of power. "Our God is a consuming fire."

Strangely, too, the movements of science, art, and commerce seem to wait on ministerial life. Printing had just been invented in time to give the Bible to the people in the period of the Reformation. The magnetic needle was applied to navigation to send that Bible and its preachers to all lands. The spirit of exploration, which has sought out every island, and is now engaged in revealing the character of Central Africa and the steppes of Asia; the study of all languages; the preparation of grammars and lexicons; the knowledge of currents of the air and the water, of the powers of steam and electricity—all these are so many voices crying: "Prepare ye the way of the Lord!" They are so many indications that when man will carry God's message all the power of omnipotence waits on his service. Instead of, like Philip, being caught away by the Spirit of the Lord, he steps on the steamship or car and is borne to his mission. Thus the omnipotence of the Father accompanies and works in harmony with the gift of ministerial power in accomplishing its great results.

The second characteristic of this power is that it is "from on high." It comes directly from the throne. Jesus ascended up on high; "He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." "Far above all principality, and power, and might, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come," hath He sat down at the right hand of the Father, and for ever gives forth this power upon the sons of men. *It is not found in books, nor does it come from books. It is not*

to be found in the teachings of professors nor in the curriculum of schools. It is a gift strictly from God : a gift so inwrought among our thoughts, emotions, and impulses that we cannot tell precisely what is from ourselves and what is directly from above. Have we not analogies of such intermingling in nature ? Placed on the insulated stool and connected with the electric machine, we are filled with electricity—filled so full that every hair on our heads stands almost erect. Yet we have no consciousness of it. But let any one come near us, and the fire sparkles from every part. So we can feel unconsciously that we have an influence which shall sparkle from our eyes and issue in words of power from our tongues.

How wonderfully is science revealing to us divine possibilities ! The electric messages which we send to our brothers, over mountains, under oceans, and across the globe so quietly—do they not illustrate how God can reach our hearts, how He can infuse them with His own power, without any outward manifestation ? This power is not only from on high ; it is a connecting link between the throne and our hearts ; it is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, not for regeneration, not for sanctification, but to use the whole of a purified nature, and especially the tongue, for aggressive Christian work.

In other characteristics and conditions we have two illustrations in the Holy Scriptures. Let us consider Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones.

He was first required to pass through the valley, to examine the bones round about, and to see that they were scattered and very dry. I think this gives us the first condition for the exercise of this power ; a clear conviction of the ruined state of humanity. This impresses the minister with the vastness of his work, and makes him terribly in earnest to save lost humanity. Any theological views which teach that humanity is not ruined—that the natural man is not depraved, that the whole head is not sick, and the whole heart not faint—any theology which finds natural soundness in man tends to weaken the *feeling* for the necessity of supernatural effort in his behalf. *If the disease was not a terribly fatal one, palliative or temporiz-*

ing expedients might be employed. The whole history of the Church shows that where depravity has been doubted, efforts for the salvation of men have been relaxed. An aggressive Gospel has always been founded on the conviction of human ruin.

The prophet then was asked: "Can these bones live?" Is there any way known to man, any remedy, of whatever character, that can possibly restore to new life? The prophet answered: "O Lord God, thou knowest." As much as to say: "With men it is impossible." Here we find the second condition of ministerial power—a clear conviction that there is no hope for man apart from divine interposition. There is no philosophy of education or culture, no combination of associations, that can save the human soul. "There is none other name under Heaven given among men whereby we must be saved"—no plan, outside of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, which gives any hope, among those who have heard the Gospel, of either present or future salvation. Any indefinite fancyings as to some other scheme of mercy not known—that there may be some other way of entering Heaven not yet revealed—only serve to weaken the intensity of the minister's agony to rescue souls from eternal ruin. The history of the Church shows—and our own observation confirms that history—that when men fancy that, either here or hereafter, Heaven may be gained otherwise than by the Cross of Christ, then the preaching of that Cross becomes less necessary for the salvation of men; and, practically, those who embrace such doctrines are less earnest for the aid of the Holy Spirit. The true minister of to-day, as the apostle of old, says: "Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." He believes also that there is a divine power which can save and rescue fallen men; that this power is of the Gospel, and that it is exercised through the preaching of the Word. This condition involves the idea of expectancy on the part of the minister. He believes that even while he prays and as he preaches, a divine power accompanies his words and is mysteriously working in the hearts of his congregation.

The third condition is found in absolute and unqualified obedience to God's command. Ezekiel stood in the midst of the valley where the bones were scattered. All signs of even recent life were gone. There was no perfect skeleton, but pieces here and there. Yet he was commanded to say: "O ye dry bones, hear the Word of the Lord." No more discouraging field possibly could be found; no place less likely to yield results. How could the dry bones hear? How could life be restored? Yet the prophet did as he was commanded. He did his duty, his whole duty. So the minister goes to a most unpromising field—to a place of outlawry and crime; a place of heathenish darkness; to cannibals who have already killed and eaten other missionaries. He obeys the command: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." That is his part; and history proves that the dry bones do hear the Word of the Lord.

The point at which supernatural power comes in is the completed work of the minister. Not waiting until the end of his mission, but at each completed stage, divine power supplements human power. The approbation of Christ on human effort was given in the words "She hath done what she could." And when a minister does all that he can; when he brings his body and strength, and study, and skill, and tact, and prayers; when he has exhausted all the resources which God has put in him—then divine power accomplishes the rest. But if the preacher expects divine power to supplement his indolence in the study, his waste of time in frivolous conversation, his hours spent in amusement, his waste of opportunities and energies, no wonder that he should be disappointed. To him the divine voice is: "Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully." He is an Ananias, holding back part of the price.

Another condition is the promise of hope uttered by the prophet: "Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones: Behold! I will cause breath to enter into you and ye shall live; and I will lay sinews upon you and will bring up flesh upon you and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live;

and ye shall know that I am the Lord." This is the gospel of promise and of hope. It is to be addressed to the lowest and most degraded. The thunders of the law are not suited for such an audience. *They* come to the proud and self-opinionated ones of earth. But to the poor and wretched, the down-trodden among men, there come the whispers of mercy in the gospel of hope: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." Under this preaching of promise there was a wonderful shaking. Bone came to bone and sinew and flesh came upon them. Then the message was given: "Prophesy unto the wind; prophesy, Son of Man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon the slain, that they may live." The prophet adds: "So I prophesied, as He commanded me; and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army." Here we have an invocation or call for the Divine Spirit as the sole agent of life and power, and all preaching fails which is not accompanied with an earnest and public recognition of the absolute need of the Divine Spirit. The minister is almost blasphemous if he takes to himself the glory of the accomplished work. "Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."

It will be said that this vision was applicable only to the people of Israel, and it pointed only to their national restoration. Admitting the primary application, the principle of divine work and of human recovery is the same in all ages, and the spiritual is oftentimes mirrored in the material.

Let us turn to the pentecostal scene, where the promise of the Father was fulfilled and this wonderful endowment was bestowed. About eight hundred years before, the prophet Joel had described it with wonderful minuteness. His prophecy was now about to be fulfilled. It was the promise of the Father which had been repeated by the Saviour Himself. The disciples were with one accord in one place. That place, I presume, was some part of the temple, for it was the hour of prayer. They had met time and again, for they had been "daily in the temple, praising and blessing God." I seem to see them drawn closely

together, the one ent're Christian Church, apart from other Jewish worshippers. At the offering up of the evening sacrifice, some fifty days before, the veil of the temple was rent while Jesus hung upon the cross. It shadowed the end of temple sacrifices, the close of the Jewish day. Now, at the offering up of the morning sacrifice, indicating the opening of the new service, with its day of coming glory, there came down upon this assembly "a sound from Heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." As in the days of Elijah, there was first a strong wind, then a fire, and then a Divine endowment. That fire was the symbol of the Divine presence. It was shown to Abraham when the smoking furnace and the lamp of fire passed between the parts of the sacrifice, foreshadowing a stage of affliction, followed by Divine interposition. It was the symbol in the burning bush, the pillar of fire, the cloud resting on tabernacle and temple, the fire which came down at Elijah's prayer. Heretofore it had been a unit, whenever and wherever it was seen. Now, as I fancy, it came as a unit over the heads of the disciples, overshadowing them all; and then out of that unit came divided or separated tongue-like forms, one of which sat upon the head of each of them—not, as I understand it, each tongue cloven—but each tongue cloven from or coming out of this unit. It was the symbol of one divine power working in each individual and speaking alike in the tongue of every nation. It was the symbol of God's presence, passing from the outward and material into the inner and spiritual. God in man becomes a tongue of fire, or a burning impulse to proclaim a divine message to humanity.

This endowment was partly miraculous, and designed for that age: partly permanent, and intended for all ages. It was not a gift of working miracles in general, that the apostles had previously received; but it was confined simply to speaking in *other languages*. It was a prophecy of coming ages. As the

people came running together from other parts of the temple, and then from all the city, and strangers and sojourners in Jerusalem, they were addressed by some of the disciples, each in his own language. The infant Church, which had just now been in one place in prayer and supplication, separated from the world and Jewish worshippers, is now scattered among the worshippers, each one telling the wonderful works of God—a type of the Church as she throws herself into all lands and among all peoples, telling in their own language, and not in the old Hebrew, or Greek, or even the Latin, the wonderful story of the Cross. This was the baptism of fire of which John the Baptist spoke when he said : “ He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.” It was the voice of the Lord, saying : “ Go, speak unto the people all the words of this life.” A measure of it, I think, is put into the heart of every truly converted man, and he longs to tell what God has done for him ; but in its highest form it comes down upon those whom it thrusts out as labourers in His harvest—perhaps its very highest form on those who, in obedience to its mandates, take their lives in their hands and go to the uttermost parts of the earth.

Separating, then, the abiding power from the temporary and miraculous, there seems to be, first, a strong impulse to speak for Jesus—an impulse like that exhibited in Christ’s own youth, when he spoke with the doctors in the temple, and said, in answer to his wondering mother’s question : “ Wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business ? ”

Secondly, this baptism does not change the natural characteristics of the minister, but works through them. Peter, quoting from Joel, said : “ Your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams.” In the young, imagination is prominent. They are ever building castles in the air and looking through prisms, viewing the world as if it were clad in brilliant hues. God uses all the imagination, and all the hopefulness and fervency, and all the energy and activity which the young possess. The old men “ dream dreams.” Memory predominates with them. They bring out of its storehouses incidents of the past. The sons and daughters “ shall prophesy ” ;

even the little children join in songs; and earth's sweetest music is heard when "out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise."

Nor is this divine endowment restricted to the influential or the wealthy; but it is given also to the servants and handmaids. In the days of servitude it glowed in the heart and spoke through the tongue of the pious slave. It works through all classes and conditions of humanity, using all the peculiarities of men and all their circumstances.

May I suggest, before passing from the description of this pentecostal scene and its prophecy, that the "wonders in Heaven above and signs in the earth beneath," the sun turned into darkness and the moon into blood, which were to be "before that great and notable day of the Lord came," may have been already accomplished. Judaism had been shaken; its sceptre was for ever departed. The blood of innocent children had been shed. Miracles without number had been wrought by the hand of Christ. The sun had been veiled in darkness for three hours while the Son of Man hung upon the cross; and the earth had quaked as with fear.

This baptism of fire wrought great changes in the character of the apostles, and manifests the same elements in the hearts of true ministers everywhere.

First, it imparted to the apostles a high degree of moral courage. Their timidity was changed into bravery. They no longer fled from persecutors or assailants; but standing in the temple, spoke daily of the work of the Lord Jesus. They feared neither prisons nor death, though their preaching necessarily aroused the strong antagonism of the Jewish authorities. They proclaimed Him publicly to be the one whom they had crucified as a malefactor. No marvel the Jewish council said: "Ye intend to bring this man's blood upon us." Reproved and even scourged, they received the pain with joy that they were counted worthy to suffer for the Lord Jesus. Imprisoned for the night, they spoke as boldly the next morning. It is supposed that all of them but one suffered a violent death for their attachment to Christ.

A clear conviction of this Divine mission still gives the minister a foundation for his heroism. He hears the voice which said to Abram : "I am the Almighty God. Walk before Me and be thou perfect." The same conviction of duty which sent the patriarch from Mesopotamia to Canaan, which sent the prophets on holy missions and inspired the heroes of Israel, works in the heart of the minister. He has heard the voice saying "Go preach," and it has been as a fire in his bones. This is usually strongest with the young minister, and especially with those who, under circumstances of great distress and difficulty, go forward in the discharge of duty. Too frequently, as we become accustomed to the ministry and are in comparatively comfortable circumstances, this thought of a Divine mission is less prominent and abiding. Hence, says the apostle : "Stir up the gift of God which is in thee." Uncover the coals which have become imbedded in ashes, that the free air of heaven may make them glow and sparkle. All ministers, in every age and under all circumstances, need this conviction. Every time they ascend the pulpit they should feel that they are sent of God—sent with a Divine message and sent to that specific congregation. Among modern ministers, Mr. Spurgeon is one of its strongest illustrations. He is a Calvinist; but his Calvinism seems to me to take one form. He feels that he was predestinated from all eternity to preach the Gospel in his Tabernacle—that he was sent to that particular people. He steps upon the platform with this feeling in his heart; he enters upon his work as though he had something important to say; he challenges the attention of the congregation by his devout manner and by his own deep interest in the subject which he presents. Without this conviction of a Divine mission, why should people gather to hear us? How can we hold their attention and reach their consciences?

Another element was a clear conviction of the presence of the Unseen. The apostles had looked up to Heaven as Jesus ascended; angels spoke with them; they had seen the tongues of fire; they lived partly in the invisible. The Spirit which still dwells in the heart of the minister allies him to the invisible. *Its home is in the highest heavens.* Its constant tendency is to

draw the human heart to the Unseen. The true minister feels that he is compassed about with a cloud of witnesses, that ever look upon him from the heavens above; that they are with him in his ministrations. Thus he lives "as seeing Him who is invisible." Faith is one of its manifestations—"the evidence of things not seen."

There is a beautiful legend of St. Chrysostom. He had been educated carefully; was a man of culture and devoted to his calling; and yet in his earlier ministry he was not remarkable for his success. At one time he had what seemed to be a vision. He thought he was in the pulpit, and in the chancel and round about him were holy angels. In the midst of them and directly before him was the Lord Jesus; and he was to preach to the congregation assembled beyond. The vision or the reverie deeply affected his spirit. The next day he ascended the pulpit he felt the impression of the scene. He thought of the holy angels as if gathered around him; of the blessed Saviour as directly before him—as listening to his words and beholding his spirit. He became intensely earnest; and from that day forward a wonderful power attended his ministrations. Multitudes gathered around him wherever he preached. Though he had the simple name of John while he lived, the ages have called him Chrysostom, the "golden-mouthed." Could we as ministers have ever with us this conviction that near us, beside us, in the pulpit and around us were holy angels; that the Blessed Saviour was ever before us, looking upon us with those eyes of love that broke Peter's heart, and listening for our words and longing to have us say something that His own spirit and power might bear with wings of fire to the hearts of the people, what an immense effect would it have on our ministrations! This blessed influence the Holy Spirit is ever exercising—taking of the things of the Father and showing them to us; bringing to our remembrance the words of Christ; opening our eyes to behold wondrous things out of His law; and revealing to us the personal presence of the Blessed Saviour in all His omnipotence. It is this Spirit which in moments of weakness, of darkness, and loneliness whispers to our souls: "Lo! I am with you alway!"

Another element was the consciousness of divine assistance. The presence of the Invisible alone might overawe and overwhelm; but when that presence is revealed and manifested in the form of assistance, what an immense power does it become! The heroes of old claimed to have the presence and assistance of their gods. Jupiter and Mars changed the destinies of battles. Æneas claimed to be the son of Venus. Alexander was called the son of Jupiter Ammon. Cæsar claimed a divine commission and influence. The very thought of friends looking on becomes an assistance. The hero in the day of battle is nerved by the thought of home, friends, and country. With what death-conquering energy will the husband and father meet the savage foe, seeking to destroy his home and to murder his wife and children! Alexander, when a young man, entering upon his career of conquest, said: "I seem to be standing where the eyes of the whole world are upon me." But how feeble these things compared to the thought of the presence of God, and that His power not only strengthens and protects us, but may pass, through our instrumentality, to the hearts of the congregation! How inspiring that other thought, that we are not looking for God to assist us, so much as God is longing to use us for His own glory! He says: "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." It is the glory of the vine that its little twigs are laden with grapes. Christ is that Vine. We are the branches and twigs; and how anxious He is that we may bring forth much fruit! What limit can we set to the results to be accomplished, if so be the power of God works through us? The power that nerved the arm of a Samson to remove the gates of Gaza, and then to shake down the pillars of an edifice; the power that through the simple blowing of rams' horns caused the walls of Jericho to fall down; the power that opened a path through the Red Sea, and fed millions with manna; that power, in all its majesty and might, is with us and ready to work, through our words, our tongues, our eyes, and through our very gestures, to reconcile the world unto God. How sad is it that some weak spot in the conductor limits the intensity and quantity of the *divine electric stream*!

This enduement of the Spirit, this holy baptism, has remained with the Church in all ages. With what power did the apostles give witness to the resurrection of Christ! How society was revolutionized and the very customs of earth changed! Men in high places, as well as low places, trembled at the preaching of Paul. Ephesus was in an uproar and Athens was moved. They said at Thessalonica: "These that have turned the world upside down have come hither also." I hear the apostles saying: "Thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of His knowledge by us in every place." How successful was the loving John in winning souls for his Master, and with what power did Peter preach while the Holy Ghost fell on those who heard! We know but little about the earlier centuries; and yet the names of an illustrious few have been handed down to us. What power was given to St. Ambrose! See the multitudes that gathered around St. Chrysostom! How they hung on his lips and how greatly they were moved! Erasmus said of him: "I know not whether more to admire the indefatigableness of the man or of his hearers." Under the preaching of Luther immense multitudes were swayed, and all Northern Europe was agitated. Under the preaching of Wickliffe, or rather of the missionaries whom he sent out, England was also stirred to its depths. Knox inflamed the mind of Scotland, as well as made its queen to tremble. In the days following the Reformation multitudes gathered in the suburbs of Paris and Antwerp to sing Christian songs and engage in religious services, when no churches were opened to them; and they were dispersed and scattered only by such rivers of blood as flowed on St. Bartholomew's Day. Spain, Portugal, France, and Belgium were all scenes of intense religious power, until the Inquisition, the fagot, and the sword put hundreds of thousands coolly to death. Livingstone, in Scotland, when only twenty-seven years of age, was selected by his brethren to preach a Monday-morning sermon, after the communion service at Shotts. He made every effort to be released; but, failing, he spent the whole night in prayer and religious conference, and then preached a sermon under which, *it is said*, at least five hundred were awakened. He says: "I

never preached one sermon which I would be earnest to see wryte but two. The one was on one Munday after the communion at Shotts, and the other was on one Munday after the communion at Holyrood ; and both these times I had spent 'the whole night before in conference and prayer with some Christians, without any more than ordinary preparation. Otherways my gift was rather suited to simple common people than to learned and judicious auditors.' But if Livingstone had written his sermon the power would not have appeared. Whitefield's sermons on paper are not remarkable. Nor is this strange. For the anatomist has not been able to find the life in a single seed. Baxter was exceedingly successful in the ministry, and it was said of him : "He always spoke as one who saw God and felt death at his back." Fletcher, of Madeley, frequently so affected his audiences that some minutes would pass before he could resume his sermon. Look at Whitefield and Wesley, and see how thoroughly society was stirred to its very foundations ; how the colliers listened, with uplifted faces and streaming eyes, to the Word of Life; and how the rabble on the commons, like wild beasts in their nature, were tamed and sobered under their preaching. I heard Cardinal Manning say, in a sermon in London, that had it not been for the preaching of John Wesley no man could tell into how deep a degradation England would have sunk. Listen to the preaching and prayers of Calamy, and see how the multitude was stirred.

Witness the ministry of Chalmers. It is said that Professor Young, who occupied the chair of Greek in the University, on one occasion "was so electrified that he leapt up from his seat upon the bench near the pulpit, and stood, breathless and motionless, gazing at the preacher, until the burst was over, the tears all the while rolling down his cheeks." Dr. Wardlaw describes one scene he witnessed as follows : "It was a transcendently grand, a glorious burst. The energy of the Doctor's action corresponded. Intense emotion beamed from his countenance. I cannot describe the appearance of his face better than by saying, as Foster said of Hall, it was 'lighted up almost into a glare.' The congregation—in so far as the spell under which I was

allowed me to observe them—were intensely excited, leaning forward in the pews like a forest bent under the power of the hurricane, looking steadfastly at the preacher and listening in breathless wonderment. One young man, apparently by his dress a sailor, started to his feet and stood till it was over. As soon as it was concluded there was (as invariably was the case at the close of the Doctor's bursts), a deep sigh, or rather a gasp for breath, accompanied by a movement through the whole audience." Look at Kentucky and Tennessee at the beginning of this century, and what wonderful phenomena occurred among Presbyterians, Methodists, and Baptists! People gathered from ten to fifty miles to attend the meetings. Thousands were converted, and most strange phenomena accompanied them. Look at Moody and Sankey in our own day, and see the thousands who have attended their services, and how many hearts have been touched.

The attainment of this ministerial power should be the object of the most intense desire. I do not suppose that all may be equally robed with it. It is an attribute of divine sovereignty, to give it to whomsoever He will, and in what measure He will; but when I remember that through His Spirit alone good can be accomplished, that God calls men to the ministry for the purpose of saving souls, that He is glorified by their success, that He has promised to be with them and in them, that He has promised that if they would ask they would receive, I cannot doubt that there is a rich manifestation of the Spirit ready for every minister, that he may be thoroughly prepared for his glorious office. What, then, shall he do that he may be most eminently successful?

First, there should be an entire consecration of every moment of time and of every power of body and soul to the service of God. If we expect the divine Spirit to dwell in us, the heart should be made ready for His reception. Like the sacrifices of old, we, as living sacrifices, should be without spot and blemish. "Know ye not," says the apostle, "that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?" "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." That Spirit is to dwell with us and abide in us. Every faculty, every power, belongs wholly to

God; and we, set apart for His service, have a grand and holy mission among men. As Jesus took upon Him the form of a servant, and cared for the sorrows and miseries of the wretched, so our divine commission does not separate us from the masses of men about us. We are to mingle with them, to sympathise with them, to love and save them.

Secondly, there must not only be consecration, but earnest prayer. It is God's pleasure to be entreated. Prayer is necessary, not only that we may receive, but that we may be in a condition to receive. We must first feel deeply the need of the Holy Spirit, that we may recognize the responsibility laid upon us, the magnitude of the work, and our own insufficiency, and that there is no power adequate but that of the Holy Spirit. We pray for it; we wait for it. As the disciples waited ten days from the Ascension to the Day of Pentecost, so must we wait until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high; but we must wait as they waited, fulfilling our duty, praising and blessing God. We must wait expectantly. We must wait, assuredly, not for any miraculous power, not for conscious endowment, but with the full conviction that God will so take possession of our memory, reason, and imagination, of our strength and of our learning, that each and all of them, vitalized by His own power, shall be made to glow with such heat that they shall burn their way by the truth to the hearts and consciences of those who hear us.

Thirdly, to intense prayer must be added fasting. If I am asked how fasting can bring spiritual power, I cannot answer satisfactorily. I simply know that Jesus said: "This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." He had given His disciples power against unclean spirits, yet there was one brought to them which they could not cast out. It raged only with more fury because of their words. But when Jesus came, the sorrowing father appealed to Him. One word was sufficient, and the unclean spirit fled. The bewildered disciples asked the Lord why they could not cast him out, and received the answer I have quoted. This implies different degrees of spiritual power—power sufficient to reach some hearts, but not all. But

who that loves his Master does not covet a power sufficient to rescue the vilest of the vile, and to bring the worst offenders to the foot of the cross? While I cannot tell how fasting operates, yet I can see that, joined to prayer, it adds to its intensity. Who has not felt a sorrow that made him for a time regardless of food? Who has not been so absorbed that he has forgotten the hours and passed beyond the time of his meals? With a dear one on the bed of death, how tasteless and valueless is food? So, if there be an intensity of prayer that absorbs the soul, we become like Him who said: "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me."

Again, it adds to the intensity of purpose. The men who sought the life of Paul bound themselves with an oath that they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed Paul. This strengthened the intensity of their purpose. When David prayed for the life of his child, he took no meat until news was brought to him that the child was dead. He would have but one desire; he would do but one thing. So the minister is so anxious to receive spiritual power, so anxious to rescue souls from ruin, so anxious to build up the Church of Christ, that sometimes he has little relish for his food. At other times, such is the cry of his soul, that he resolves to take no meat until his prayer prevails with God. This intense desire fits the soul for holy communion and for sublime purposes. Its whole power has become centred in one thing. As the ball, when the rifle is aimed at the mark, strikes to its centre, so the minister, having but one aim, his whole soul absorbed with one thought, finds his words going directly to the hearts of his hearers. How wonderful the example of Christ! Pure and spotless, He needed no prayers for Himself. He prayed for others, for His disciples, for the world. He continued whole nights in prayer, while loving disciples yielded to sleep. He prayed for others as they would not pray for themselves. He needed no fasting for Himself, yet see Him fasting forty days and nights in the wilderness, after which the angels came and ministered unto Him, and He came out of the wilderness to heal the sick and raise the dead. All night in prayer He was transfigured; and Moses and Elias came

down to talk with Him, in the presence of His disciples, of the decease He should accomplish for Israel. Moses, with God on the mountain, came down with a shining face, shining so brightly that the people could not gaze upon him until he was veiled. So the minister, coming out of his closet from his seasons of fasting and prayer, is gifted with words which pierce to the hearts of the people; and sometimes it seems as if his countenance shone like the face of Stephen, who, gazing up into heaven, was illumined by a ray from the Throne.

This spirit also brings before us the most solemn thoughts in reference to our congregations. Immortal souls come to listen for tidings of salvation. God has stirred them by His Holy Spirit, and sent them to hear. If they are saved, it must be through our words; and upon the issue of the sermon the destiny of immortal souls may be sealed. Who could preach carelessly, could he thus feel? Besides, it may be the last sermon that some one may hear. Almost every sermon is the last that some one shall hear. More persons die every week than there are pulpits in the land. Could we single out some person in the assembly who would never hear another sermon, how we would try to preach Jesus! Our eyes are sealed as to destiny, but that person is in the congregation, and we must draw the bow at a venture, trusting that the divine arm and eye will give to the bow sufficient tension, and to the arrow the right direction. Whenever I have heard of some person present in the assembly being called suddenly away by accident or disease, I have never felt regret that my sermon was not more beautiful or more polished, but I have regretted that it was not preached with more demonstration of the Spirit and of power.

I cannot conceal my conviction that, but for the indolence and negligence in those who occupy the sacred desk, this power would be more universal. It seems to me that the possibilities connected with preaching have been only partially realized, and that a brighter and more glorious day will yet dawn upon the Church.

If there is one thing above all others that I have desired for myself, and that above all others I covet for you, young gentle-

men, it is this ministerial power, this baptism of fire. Seek for this more than for learning, for wisdom, for oratory; and, above all, more than for any thought of your acceptability or popularity. To preach one sermon like Livingstone's would be worth a life of service. I believe you all may have such power that thousands shall be converted under your preaching. If the Bible be true, and if you are divinely called to the ministry, you are lifted out of the common circles of life, and God comes to dwell in you and to use all your powers for Himself. Your highest glory will be to appear as living, walking Christs among men, and you will feel, with the apostle, "For me to live is Christ."



VIII.

THE RELATION OF THE PASTORATE TO PREACHING.

THE pulpit is not the only sphere of the preacher's power. There are other spheres which are intimately associated with it. The minister is a pastor, as well as a preacher. He both feeds and cares for his flock. He not only leads them to pastures green and nourishing, but guards them against prowling beasts of prey, that thirst for their blood, as well as against precipices and morasses, where they might receive fatal injury.

As a preacher he speaks to the people collectively; but as a pastor he watches over them individually. By careful observation he learns their religious condition, their past advancement, the difficulties which they encounter, the hopes and fears which influence their lives, and is prepared to furnish them the truth which they need. Thus, too, the sermon which he delivers to the whole congregation becomes a source of spiritual power to each individual.

These two classes of work are so intimately associated, that it is impossible perfectly to separate them. The preacher cannot reap the full harvest of his labours without being a diligent pastor; and the pastor can accomplish but little without the truth and power of the pulpit. Pastoral duties are enjoined by the direct command of Christ, and are illustrated in His own glorious example. Their character is also exemplified in the labours of the apostles as they visited from house to house, and warned them day and night with tears.

I do not propose to discuss the duties of the pastorate, though *the field is a very wide and fruitful one.* I propose only to

notice the influence which pastoral duties exercise upon the pulpit in giving to the preacher new zeal for his work, and in enabling him to trace the progress of that work as it may appear from time to time under his labours, and also in preparing the congregation to be more profited by bringing them into friendship and sympathy with the minister.

One form of this work is preaching outside of the regular pulpit. The parable of the supper was designed to instruct the disciples to go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in. We are not only to preach to those who are so anxious to hear us that they will come to the churches and aid in spreading the Gospel ; but we are to go forth and seek for those who will not attend the churches. The Saviour preached the Gospel on the mountain-side or from a boat on the Sea of Galilee. He addressed His disciples as they journeyed to and fro or rested by the wayside. He preached one of His most sublime sermons to a single hearer—the woman of Samaria—as He sat on the well ; and His rich promise was given to the dying thief who was crucified at His side. He gave the benediction at the marriage in Cana of Galilee ; spoke words of life at the death-bed of the ruler's daughter and gave comfort to sorrowing parents ; touched the bier on which was borne the son of the widow of Nain and raised him from the dead ; called Lazarus back from the tomb to wipe away the tears from the eyes of his weeping sisters ; and in His tenderness He took little children in His arms and blessed them. He was the preacher and the Saviour everywhere. The great apostle to the Gentiles in his work imitated his Master. He preached in the Jewish synagogues ; disputed in the school of Tyrannus ; proclaimed the Gospel on Mars Hill ; delivered sermons by the seaside ; spoke in an upper room through late hours of the night ; and warned the people not only publicly, but from house to house. These examples teach us not to confine our ministrations to sacred edifices. We may meet with people in smaller companies ; we may have audiences of less culture ; but we will learn a more conversational and direct style of *preaching*. The ultimate position of the preacher is not merely the utterance of the truth so as to reach the understanding and

stir the emotions and affections, but to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. This work is so vast it cannot be accomplished merely by sermons in the pulpit. They must be supplemented by personal visiting, conversation, and effort with each individual.

This pastoral visiting is essential to the preacher, that he may learn the condition and wants of his congregation. Without this knowledge there will be but little directness in his sermons; they will be comparatively profitless to his people. In his office of teacher, before he can instruct wisely and well, he must learn what his hearers already know. That he is a divine teacher and messenger not only does not release him from this duty, but rather intensifies his responsibility in it. The professor in college may understand well the highest functions in algebra, but it would be simple folly to lecture upon them to those who had not learned the first principles of arithmetic, or to discuss the peculiar properties of the sections of a cone before those who had not studied the elements of geometry. Professors in every college, teachers of every science, examine their students before they admit them to recite in the various departments, that instruction may be given according to their several advancements. If this be necessary in acquiring that kind of knowledge which is very desirable, yet without which a man will still live, move, and be both useful and happy, how much more important is it in acquiring that knowledge which is essential to his happiness here and hereafter!

To one unacquainted with Christian congregations, and with Christian instruction, it must be a perfect marvel how one discourse can suit a congregation composed of all grades of ages, talents, acquirements, and accomplishments, and by one who often knows not the condition of scarcely a person in the audience. The basis of such teaching is found only in the universal application of the elementary truths of the Gospel to every human heart.

The settled pastor, who has served his congregation for many years, who has baptized and married a generation, who has buried friends and parents, may be supposed to have a general

knowledge of the condition of his audiences. Yet this acquaintance extends chiefly to external circumstances. Without personal visiting and frequent conversation with individuals, he cannot know the workings of their minds, the presence and pressure of disturbing doubts, the strength of severe temptations, the rapid currents which they are trying to stem, and the help of which they are constantly in need. Besides this, additions are constantly made to every congregation. Young hearts are expanding ; they have longings for the invisible and eternal, which are made known only to the pastor who visits them. These changes, together with the influence of pernicious publications and the strange ideas which enter almost every dwelling, and find a way to almost every heart, require constant vigilance on the part of the oldest and most experienced pastor. The young pastor is a stranger to the religious condition of his audience. How can he become acquainted with it, so far as to form his sermons appropriately, except by personal visiting and conversation ?

In an itinerant ministry, like that of the denomination to which I belong, the difficulty with new congregations is largely increased. The preacher, passing from year to year, or every few years, to different localities, is necessarily unacquainted with his people, and must be, at first, at a loss for suitable topics. I doubt whether an itinerant ministry could be highly successful without the aid of assistants who are acquainted with the congregation. To secure this object, class-meetings have proved of immense value. A small number meet together for prayer and religious conversation under a leader, who thus becomes thoroughly acquainted with every member. Under the order of the church, these leaders are expected to meet the minister every week, and it is his duty to visit the various classes. This arrangement serves to promote personal acquaintanceship among the various members, and to furnish a mode by which the minister can more quickly meet with all his congregation. By it pastoral assistance can also be furnished to the preacher when needed. But, valuable as these meetings are to the itinerant ministry, they do *not* prevent the necessity of direct personal visiting from house to house. *It is only in such a way that the member can enjoy*

a full and earnest conversation with his pastor, and can tell him of the doubts which may trouble him, and the peculiar trials and difficulties which meet and surround him. If the pastor becomes thoroughly acquainted with the religious condition of his people, he will be able, for their edification, to bring forth from Sabbath to Sabbath, out of his treasury of experience, things both new and old.

Nor should pastoral visiting, in this view, be confined merely to members of the church. The preacher should mingle freely with all the members of his congregation, and visit those who occasionally attend his ministry. He may thus learn their doubts or their objections; he can ascertain what stumbling blocks lie in their way, and what it is that keeps them from embracing the Saviour and from fellowship in His church. To labour successfully, to remove scepticism, to heal difficulties, to bring families into unity and love, he must mingle with the people, and they must feel that he takes a deep interest in them.

Again, the minister needs to visit his people to gain their sympathy and good will. Quintilian says that the first requisite for an orator is to gain the good will of his audience. We all know how much more readily children learn when they love their teachers, and how little benefit they receive when they dislike them. The minister beloved by his congregation has a key to their affections. They listen with delight, and find pleasure and inspiration in all his services. But if the minister be an object of aversion, if he even be a stranger, his words are without sufficient power to the hearts of his hearers. To gain the good will of his audience, there is no method more effectual than to manifest an interest in them and their families. The preacher who has a cheerful word for the man of business when he meets him or calls to visit his family, especially in times of affliction, and who has a kind word for their children, soon acquires an influence over those families such as to make them attentive and interested hearers. This visiting should be so thorough that the names of all the congregation, and, as far as practicable, the names of the children, should be carefully learned. The good shepherd "*calleth his own sheep by name*," is the language of the blessed

Saviour. Children especially should be addressed by their names. They feel that the man who does so takes an interest in them. And the older ones among us would prefer to be called by our own names, rather than be addressed as Mr. Jones or Mr. Smith.

Again, pastoral visiting furnishes the preacher an opportunity to learn the influence of his sermons, and to ascertain accurately the effects which they have produced. Thus he will receive suggestions which may be of future use. If, in visiting the man of business, he finds that the influence of his last Sabbath's sermon lingers in the counting-room, in the office, or the shop, he should thank God that he was able to deliver such a message, and should study how he may secure other trains of thought equally profitable. If, in visiting the sick, he finds that his words of comfort have been treasured in their memory, he will rejoice in his ministry of consolation, and will apply himself to find other lessons of encouragement in the Word of God. But, should he find that his sermons have not been treasured, that the people refer to no thoughts of comfort or consolation in them—if the old are without cheer and the young are disposed to wander away, he has serious cause to inquire whether he should not change his style of preaching. He should consider whether, in view of their condition, he had carefully selected important truths; whether his address had been direct and earnest; and whether he had endeavoured to speak to them because God had given him a message. Or, should he find that some of his sermons have been misunderstood, it will furnish him an occasion to explain, and he will try to correct the misapprehension. He may possibly find that, in presenting certain doctrines or in urging to certain duties, he has so stated them that to some of his people they seem to conflict with other doctrines or with other duties. He will thus learn to be more guarded in definition, and to discriminate more carefully in all his utterances.

Another advantage will be afforded by ascertaining what class of topics has been most successful in reaching peculiar minds. They will tell him of sermons which they heard in former years, and of the deep impression they received. They will speak of the preciousness of certain texts of Scripture. Oftentimes a ray of

light is thus thrown upon a passage of Scripture to which his attention had never been given. Sometimes these turns of thought, learned in the cottage or the cabin, will open up a wonderful vista of Scripture truth, looking through which, he will find much that is beneficial to his own heart and to the heart of his hearers. Sometimes in my own experience a passage was so quoted that it seemed altogether new. For a moment I doubted whether it was in the Bible; but, on reflection, I found I had connected it with some other train of thought, opening only one such crystal, when others equally beautiful had been concealed from view. Many a text have I thus found for my Sabbath's sermon as I visited the garrets and cellars of cities or the abodes of the poor in the country. I remember once accompanying a lady to a poor dwelling, where we found an old Negro woman, lying on a bed of straw and sick unto death. Yet she talked so sweetly of the love of Jesus, she was so patient in all her sufferings, and spoke with such resignation, and with hopefulness almost amounting to ecstasy, that my heart was deeply touched. It was not only a lesson to me personally, but I think the influence of it was evident in my sermons for several weeks.

Again, the work of the true preacher is to warn every man, to teach every man in all wisdom, and to present every man perfect before God. To accomplish this, he must watch the progress of his work; he must add "line upon line and precept upon precept." The farmer does not sow the seed and then pay no further attention to the growing crop. He will love to watch its growth; and he will look forward with intense interest and with earnest expectation to the harvest, when the ripened grain may be gathered in and preserved. So the preacher who is sent of God will love to trace the growth of the spiritual work in his congregation. He saw last Sabbath a tear starting in the eye, or a bowed head, and he knew that the Spirit of God was writing lessons upon a receptive heart. He longs to see that brother, and to converse with him personally and closely on religious topics; to remove his difficulties and to lead him to the Saviour. So he will follow up every indication of spiritual influence which he *notices in his congregation*; and, if he perceives that some are

hardened and careless, he will be anxious to converse with them, to learn their governing motives and through what avenues they can best be reached. For there is some avenue to every heart, and the faithful pastor will find that avenue, however guarded; will co-operate with those movings of the Spirit; and will find some truth which will touch the conscience. Sometimes he will find that some of his congregation are wandering into sin; that evil influences are alluring young men to evil habits; and he will anxiously seek some plan by which these wanderers may be brought nearer the church and saved from ruin. As the shepherd, spending the long days of summer with his flock and guarding them during the night from the attacks of wild animals, learns to know and to love each member of his flock, and, if he misses one, hies away to the mountains and searches until he finds it, so the true minister watches over every member of his congregation with ceaseless care. God has made him a shepherd to care for his flock; a watchman to guard them against danger.

Last summer I passed over the great mountains and plains which lie between us and the Pacific Ocean. I frequently watched the shepherds, with their immense flocks, and marked their constant diligence and care. I saw the herders, with their numerous herds of cattle, and was surprised to observe the constant vigilance which they exercised. The herder was always in the saddle; his eyes were continually on the cattle. If one wandered toward a precipice or became separated from the herd, it was immediately followed and brought back in safety. How much more responsible is the office of the Christian pastor? If he expects to gain the affection of all the members of his congregation, if he desires to realize the full fruit of his sermons, his eye must be upon them, and he must exercise over them a sleepless vigilance.

In this work he will also become informed of the relative fitness of the members of his congregation for such work as he may need in carrying out his plans for church activity. He will thus also gain increasing influence over the hearts of the children. Much of the sermon is necessarily beyond their comprehension; and, not being interested, the church services are

wearisome. When they do attend, it is rather a matter of form. The preacher is too frequently a stranger to them, seems to overlook them, has no word of address directed to them. Being without interest in the services, they sometimes imbibe, not only toward the sanctuary, but often also toward the Sabbath, an aversion which tinges and influences their whole lives. But if children feel that the preacher is their friend; if he has a kind word for them when he visits the family; if he speaks to them by name when he meets them in the street; if he takes an interest in their studies and gives them a word of encouragement; then they will love to attend the church services, delighted to meet him. Their presence will also be an inspiration to him. As he looks into their bright eyes and expectant countenances, and remembers what an influence they may exert for Christ, he will be anxious to speak some word that shall draw them early to the loving Saviour. He will think of them in his study when he is preparing his sermon; he will think of them when he bends his knees in prayer and implores a blessing on his congregation. While he prepares to feed the sheep, he will think also of the little lambs. His sermons will be more simple in their style, more brief and pointed in their sentences, and some incident will be interwoven which will touch the hearts of the children. That simplicity, that illustration, will also touch the hearts of those who are older. Indeed, there is no way by which the good will of mothers can be gained so readily as by acquaintance with their children, and especially that acquaintance which manifests a deep interest for their mental and moral excellence. Fathers, also, will unite in this good will. The preacher who wins the heart of childhood finds the parents drawn to his church and listening with profit to his ministry. The story of Themistocles is well known. He said once of his little boy: "This child is greater than any man in Greece. For the Athenians command Greece; I command the Athenians; his mother commands me; and he commands 'his mother.' "

But, notwithstanding the manifest benefits resulting from pastoral work, there are preachers who have a great distaste for its duties. They think they need the time for their studies.

They are timid about visiting families, and they think the associations in many instances would be both unpleasant and unprofitable. Such preachers are greatly mistaken as to the elements that they especially need. Pastoral visiting furnishes just that supplement to the library which the successful preacher absolutely requires. In his books he gains a knowledge of subjects which require abstract thought. He dwells in an intellectual realm of unchanging beauty. He has around him the best productions of the grandest minds which have graced our earth. No wonder is it that he desires to spend the larger portion of his time in such fellowship and communion. But he needs not only great thoughts; but to learn how to apply them to humanity in all the walks of life. He lives in an intellectual life; his thoughts are of the past; his visions of the future. He does not come into contact with the harrassing cares and thoughts which agitate the bosom of the working man. As Christ came down from Heaven and walked among men, so must the minister come out of his study, away from the communion with almost angelic minds, and walk in the common paths of life. This is not only a duty, but it is an essential requisite to the highest ministerial success. He must be a man among men, to gain their affections, and to share their sympathies. He must walk with them side by side; he must take their hands in his; he must take, to some extent, on his heart their burdens and sorrows and cares. His ministry will be thus improved and enlarged. He will speak with a sympathy, tenderness, and love unknown before. The deep feeling which he acquires in talking with his people will tinge the very tones of his voice and make them sympathetic, and the poorest in his congregation will feel that his words of sympathy and encouragement were meant for them.

Nor should he hesitate to visit because he is timid. That very timidity gives a crowning grace to his work. His people will feel that he comes to see them not because he delights in the work of visiting, but because he wishes to do them good. He comes as a messenger from God, and he brings a divine message. His spirit will be one of tenderness and love; his conversation pure and instructive; his movements in the family

kind and elevated ; his manner free from low familiarity and haughty reserve ; his conversation will tend toward the point for which he came. He will, indeed, speak kindly, and sympathize with their afflictions, and share in their cares ; but he comes to represent his Saviour, and to drop some word which shall stimulate to duty, and which shall inspire to a higher life. In the spirit of his Master, he will be in an atmosphere of prayer. He has visited because it was his duty ; he has the promise that his Master will be with him to bless his labours ; and so the words which he utters and the spirit which he manifests become a benediction to the family—yes, a benediction to himself, for he leaves such a place more like Christ than when he entered it.

Nor must these visits be confined to the wealthy and educated. The poor and the uneducated need more help than those who are prosperous. If there be poor-houses, prisons, or hospitals within your sphere, neglect them not. The Great Head of the Church puts Himself in the place of His weakest followers, and says to those who fail to perform this duty : “I was sick and in prison, and ye visited Me not.” And when the wondering heart asks how or when, He replies : “Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to Me.” But, if the visit is made ; if the hunger and thirst be assuaged ; if the naked are clothed, and the stranger cared for ; how sweet the accents : “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.” I shall never forget how vividly this passage came to my mind, as an illustration of human feeling, when once I was travelling in Eastern lands. I was in feeble health, and thought it doubtful whether I should ever see my family again. One day I received a letter narrating an act of kindness which had been performed for my youngest child by a friend. In a moment my heart leaped across the sea, and in grateful recognition of the favour I said in my thoughts to my friend : “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me.” It was to me more precious when done in my absence to my little child than had it been done when present for myself. A sweet charm has rested in my *mind on these words* ever since. It seems to me that Jesus is

better pleased with a “cup of cold water given in the name of a disciple” than He was when the woman of Samaria gave to His weary lips a draught from Jacob’s well.

If any of you are troubled with timidity, and think you cannot visit because you are timid, let me say for your encouragement that I think I was as timid as you can possibly be. When coming to the years of a young man, it was a positive pain for me to visit the houses even of friends. Many a time I walked by the door of a neighbour’s house, waiting five or ten minutes for some one to come out of the door, rather than knock and enter in. So bashful was I that many a time I walked around the square rather than meet a young lady whom I saw coming toward me on the street. I had much of this timidity when I entered the ministry. The palms of my hands sometimes burned at the very thought of going out to visit. But I felt I must go; the Church bade me go; I had promised God I would go; and as the soldier in the army walks forward timidly, yet determinedly, into the thickest of the fight, so I went in my Master’s name. If I could, I took with me some experienced Christian friend. I spoke to the people kindly; drew out of them their religious condition and experience; found many a wandering one, and tried to comfort many a sorrowing heart. Such visits made me better, taught me to feel for the people, and to break for them the bread of life with more fitness. In a revival which followed, out of nearly three hundred who came to the altar for prayer there were very few with whom I had not previously conversed; and I knew how to enter into their sympathies, and to point them to the Lamb of God.

Nor will this visiting, if properly performed, interfere with the minister’s time for study. After the morning has been devoted to study, the minister needs a change of occupation which will give him exercise and recreation. His going to and fro in his pastoral visiting, his climbing stairways to reach the needy, his walking in the suburbs of cities or in country villages, will furnish him with an exercise as invigorating to *health* as the amusements in which so many spend their leisure *hours*. Indeed, so far from being at a loss intellectually,

the opportunity to unfold some passage of Scripture on which we have dwelt makes us see more clearly the truth which we wish to portray, and in this way be better prepared for the sermon on the coming Sabbath. The true teacher is often more benefited than his scholars by the lesson he imparts.

It does not fall into my province to enter into the modes in which this work may be performed; nor do I wish to dwell upon them. But I may say that all coarseness, vulgarity, and low expression should be strictly avoided. There should be cheerfulness and kindness, but no undue familiarity. We enter the houses of friends because we are endorsed by the Church. The office of the minister gains for us invitation where we are personally but little known. We go in the character of Christian gentlemen and of holy men of God. If we do not so conduct ourselves, we violate propriety, disappoint our friends, and bring reproach upon the ministry of the Church. Every family should feel, when we leave, that a servant of the Lord Jesus has been among them; and some influence should remain which will make religion appear more beautiful and heavenly.

It is, however, in its reflex influence upon the pulpit that we consider this subject. Without such visiting, sermons will be likely to become mere essays—full of thought and learning, perhaps, but not specially directed to the audience. The minister must be a student of human nature. He needs to mingle with society in all its forms and to understand its various necessities. He must also mingle among his own congregation, and learn their experiences of sorrow and joy, of hope or fear, as they tread the daily walks of life. It is true, he may get glimpses of human nature from the writings of such skilful delineators as Shakespeare, and he may know the workings of the human mind as taught in mental philosophy; but such knowledge will be of little benefit to him compared with that derived from actual observation. What the congregation needs is the pouring forth of a heart which is filled with sympathy for their peculiar necessities and in their peculiar circumstances.

There are, however, some ministers to whom pastoral visiting is not of great service. They have been accustomed to mingle with people; they enjoy society, shake hands with everyone, and are at home everywhere. Such men need their books more than they need society. They are living, earnest, pleasing preachers; but are seldom profound and solid thinkers. Their congregations love to meet them; but they think more of their conversation at the fireside than they do of their work in the pulpit. Such ministers may be met at almost every funeral, and have time to go to the cemetery, even though it be three or four miles distant. They attend every festival and are found at every public and social gathering. Sometimes young ministers, who behold a radiant glory in Gospel truth, are repelled from visiting by the superficial character of the pulpit discourses of this class of men. Yet they should remember that these men do but little of true pastoral work. They call familiarly in various families, and join in jokes and laughter, sit down sometimes and smoke cigars, and are ready to take part in any recreation or game; but leave without a word spoken for Jesus, or a prayer offered in behalf of the family. Seldom are such men found in the cabins of the poor, by the bedside of the sick, or in conversation with the prodigal young man, who is breaking the hearts of his father and mother, and is wandering into paths of sin. Seldom is he found pleading with such an one to reform his life and to turn to the Saviour. Seldom is he found in earnest conversation endeavouring to bring comfort and consolation to the suffering widow. Seldom is he found visiting the man of business, who is in deep embarrassment and distress, and whose heart is wrung with agony, under the pressure of difficulties and responsibilities. As the result of long observation, I am satisfied that those who are the closest students and are by nature the most timid, become the best pastors when they conquer themselves and instruct the faithful from house to house. For they go not to spend the moments in trivial conversation; but they go under the conviction that Christ has *sent them as His servants and in His stead, to carry His benediction to the households.* They tell of the wonderful love of Christ,

and of the exhaustless store of spiritual riches in reserve for those who love Him. They are quick to extend a helping hand to their brothers, and to lift up the lowly, the discouraged, and the sorrowing.

What had the Lord Jesus been to us if we had only the record of His sermons without the record of His going about doing good? We would listen to His words as voices from above; but our hearts are drawn closer to Him when we behold Him opening the eyes of the blind, and stooping to touch the leper shut out from society by his loathsome disease. It is then the heavens kissing the earth. It is God in contact with the human soul. In such a record Jesus becomes *Immanuel*—God with us.

I think the love of Jesus touches the human heart more than the great truths which He uttered. Both were necessary. Without truth, the human soul would not have been elevated. Without the corresponding love, that truth would not have borne such a rich fruitage. If the young preacher desires to be a true successor of the apostles, let him imitate the plan and work of Jesus, and follow the apostles as they followed their glorious Master.

You will not fancy, I know, that I underrate the value of close and diligent study. But when I take my New Testament in my hands I find the Saviour and His apostles teaching the people, visiting the sick, healing the wretched, comforting the sorrowing, and being much in prayer; but I find not a single direction how to write a sermon, or how to read it, or how to manage the voice and gestures so as to be counted an eloquent orator. They had the truth by direct inspiration; we must study to attain it. But, with that truth given, they seem to have thought of nothing but going forth, burning, shining, and blessing, in all the glory of the Gospel of glad tidings, and, without one thought of appearance or manner, simply presented the truth so as to touch the hearts and consciences of the people. As Christ and His disciples did not dwell at all upon what occupies the minds of so many young ministers, so I fear that many think but little of what burns in the hearts of Christ and His apostles.

There are a few large churches where the congregations are so immense and the membership is so numerous that it seems impossible for the pastor to know his people. Such is Spurgeon's church, with its five thousand membership; and such are a few large congregations in our principal cities. The pastoral work in such cases is performed by assistants employed by the pastor of the congregation. There are some young men who feel so conscious of their superior power, who have such premonitions of coming greatness, that, imitating the example of these distinguished ministers, they resolve to devote themselves wholly to their studies and to preaching, to spend their lives in something more noble than visiting people. Such young men should remember that these eminent ministers began either in country places or with small congregations. So far as I am acquainted with the men who build these mammoth institutions, they began at the bottom of the ladder, studied with the common people, preached and worked with the common people, and in this way gained that knowledge of human nature which enabled them to gather immense congregations around them. Such men as Spurgeon and Beecher began at the bottom of the ladder, in a country place, and climbed up. The young man who begins at the top of the ladder invariably climbs down.

IX.

COLLATERAL AND MISCELLANEOUS WORK.

The range of a preacher's work is widely extended. His chief labour is in the pulpit, and in pastoral visiting among the members. There are, however, many collateral fields which he must cultivate, and some of them are essential to the stability and growth of his congregation.

Closely connected with preaching is the offering of public prayer. This service should be conducted with that reverence which will show the deep piety of the minister, and which will inspire the people with solemnity and devotion. Prayer should issue from a heart which feels its own wants, and which is in sympathy with the wants of the congregation. In this service, thanksgiving should occupy a prominent place, both because of the multitude of mercies personally received, and as a congregation, and because the spirit of thanksgiving is always appropriate. The people should be reminded of the blessings which they constantly enjoy, because there is such a tendency to murmur or complain at the lot which we occupy. Among the Jews sacrifice and thanksgiving were required under the law, and the Psalmist frequently exhorts to come before God with thanksgiving. In the New Testament we are taught: "With thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." There should also be the confession of sins—personal, social, and national; the deprecation of God's wrath, and prayer for pardon through the atoning merits of Christ; and the expression of trust in the willingness and power of the Great Father to bless and save. Prayer should be offered in such a reverential spirit.

that the people shall feel that the minister is conscious of the presence of the great Jehovah, and that the Holy Spirit is already communicating with his heart. No words indicating a lack of reverence, no expressions of familiarity, no real address to the people under the garb of prayer, should be employed ; and even the name of the Deity should be so uttered as to indicate the solemn awe with which even a redeemed spirit should approach before the Throne. The preacher's evident access to the Mercy Seat inspires the hearts of the people. He utters petitions for what his own heart needs ; and while he prays for himself, many an aching heart is comforted under the power of his pathetic, fervent prayer. He also enters into the sympathies of the people, and, in their name, and in their place, pours out earnest supplication for needed mercy. This spirit of prayer prepares the hearts of the people for the reception of the Word. As the minister prays, in the consciousness of his own weakness, for divine help ; as he pleads for the presence and power of the great Head of the Church ; as he prays that the people may receive the truth which he is about to utter, and that the Holy Spirit, by its sacred influences, may rest upon every one the spirit of prayer descends also upon the congregation. Thus brought into the immediate presence of God, they too look for the purifying influence of the Blessed Spirit, and their hearts are brought into sympathy with the speaker. To some extent they feel the pressure of his great thoughts. The burden which lies on his heart is in part transferred to them. They spend the hour in worshipping God "in the beauty of holiness," and much of the profit of the service comes from the hallowing influence of the prayer which has been offered.

That the minister may have the true spirit of prayer in the pulpit, he will need to cultivate secret prayer also. It is in his closet that the divine power is gained which manifests itself in the midst of public duty. Our Saviour says: "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet. And when thou hast shut thy door, pray to the Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly." In harmony with this is the beautiful language of the Psalmist: "He that

dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." The closet of the Christian thus becomes allied to the holy of holies in the temple. Thither the high priest passed once a year, and was for a moment under the shadow of the wings of the cherubim, and face to face with the divine Shekinah ; but the Christian, in the holy service of secret prayer, abides under that shadow, while the divine Shekinah ever illumines and warms his heart. Then are realized the promises to him who maketh the Most High his habitation.

The length of the prayer may very properly vary with the spirit of prayer and the circumstances of the congregation ; but, as a general rule, I doubt whether an extemporaneous prayer should exceed ten, or, at the utmost fifteen minutes, as the people are liable to become weary, and then the spirit of devotion is weakened.

In conducting meetings for social prayer, the tact and skill of the preacher may find a wide field. This service, as in distinction from the Sabbath service, is designed for the whole church, and the minister should not occupy an undue proportion of the time. Some preachers kill their prayer-meetings by their long prayers, reading long chapters, and giving long exhortations. They should remember that the people are benefited by taking part, and as many as possible should be induced to join in these social services. The more who speak or pray, the better is it for the growth of the Church, and for the development of the moral power of the congregation. In this way also the minister may best learn the religious condition of his people. Especially should the young convert be urged to speak and pray. In New Testament times, the Holy Spirit fell upon the people, and the gift of tongues was for the young convert, as well as for the old. If children did not learn to speak in early childhood, the tongue would be clumsy all through life. So should the young Christian be encouraged to join at once in the social services of the congregation. As in the family the old, and middle-aged, and children freely mingle together, so should it be in the church of God.

Nor should the minister come to his prayer-meeting without

preparation. Let him have some topic on which his thoughts will be arranged and condensed. Let him select something which will call forth the sympathy, support, and prayers, or increase the activity of his people. Commencing promptly at the appointed moment, let his own services be spirited and brief, and then let him guide the current of the congregation. Brief prayers, interspersed with a few verses of Christian song and such utterances as the members may wish to make, may profitably occupy the evening hour. Under some ministers, the prayer-meeting is the glory of the church, and a large part of the congregation attends. Under others, the interest diminishes, and scarcely as many will attend as are necessary to conduct the services.

The Sunday school should always receive the careful attention of the minister. He should teach the church that the school is a part of its legitimate work and under its careful control; not a something outside of the church, but a regular part of the Sabbath services. Wherever churches are regularly established, I have no sympathy with what are termed "union schools," or institutions without specific religious management and government. In sparsely-settled sections of the country, where no denomination is strong enough to maintain a school of its own, or in neighbourhoods where no church is organized, such schools may be of great profit, and should be encouraged; but where every church is organized, the children of the church should be taught by the church. In many places a positive injury is received in the separation of the school from the church. The children are placed under the control of irresponsible parties, and the school superintendent not unfrequently places himself in a kind of antagonism to the minister. Such a course is ever disastrous. The lambs of the flock should be the special care of the minister, and he fails in his duty if he does not, in harmony with church order, carefully supervise the interests of the school. He should not seek to supersede the superintendent, nor to interfere with his government of the school; but the superintendent and the teacher *should ever be in harmony with the preacher, and should consider themselves as a part of his official staff.*

The supervision of the minister should extend particularly to the selection of books for the library that is to be placed in the hands of the teachers and the children of the school. It is but seldom that superintendent and teachers, engrossed with the busy cares of life, have full time to examine the multitudinous issues of the press which are sought to be placed in these libraries. Each publisher has a list of his own books, and wishes to sell them. He exchanges with other publishers, and thus may have a very large variety. He is so occupied with the financial affairs of his establishment that he may not know the precise character of the teachings of the books which he publishes. Without intent to do wrong, he recommends works which ought not to find their way into Sunday schools. A committee is oftentimes appointed to purchase a library. It is frequently composed of men who are good and earnest and pious; but they are not extensively acquainted with religious literature, and they purchase such works as have pretty titles, are well printed, are recommended by publishers, and, above all, which are of low price. In this way books of doubtful or erroneous doctrinal teaching, or which sanction unchristian conduct, or works of fiction, without anything to recommend them, are placed in the library; and they vitiate, rather than improve, the taste. The books introduced into the Sunday school should contain such doctrinal or practical teaching as may be in harmony with the church; otherwise, the influence of the Sabbath school may not only be of little service, but may even become of positive injury to the interests of the congregation. In this day of light and loose and sceptical publications, no duty is more imperative on the minister than to exercise a watchful supervision over the literature which is purchased by the church and is placed in the Sunday school library for the use of its children; for the young have a right to regard the teaching of such works as sanctioned by the church.

No matter how great may be the intellectual power and influence of the preacher, he cannot accomplish his work unaided and alone. He is the general of an army; but he cannot conquer without soldiers. He must have others to assist him.

The duty of the preacher, then, is to study carefully the genius and organization of his church, and to secure all the assistance which that organization can furnish. Whatever officers—whether elders, or deacons, or trustees, or stewards, or leaders—may constitute the officiary of his church, he is to place himself in intimate relations with each and all of them. His study should be how to employ their talents in church activity, so as to assist in aggressive work. He should further study how to enlist the entire talents of his church-members, old and young, men and women, in spheres of Christian usefulness. This he should do not only for the assistance which they may give him, but for the benefit which results—first to the church, and then to themselves. The true teacher is ever a learner. There is no process by which our learning becomes accurate and methodical so soon, as by attempting to communicate it to others. Hence everyone who is engaged in doing good is also engaged in self-development and culture. In different denominations church organizations vary; but, be the organization what it may, the great object is to develop into perfect Christians the entire membership, and to act upon the world as an attractive and aggregating power, which constantly adds to its own magnitude.

There are some lines of church work which are common to all. First, there are the social meetings in the church, which all should be invited to attend. It should be the study of the preacher, on the one hand, to make these meetings interesting, as well as profitable; and, on the other, to induce every member of his congregation to be fully identified with them. Some he can skillfully draw into religious conversation; others into prayer. In every assembly there are musical voices which should be cultivated in and for divine worship. The minister should draw to the prayer-room the best singers of his congregation, who may either lead or give volume to the voice of grateful song. For want of a little thoughtful attention, there may be no person *present* who can lead the singing; and the pleasure and the profit of the evening are not only marred, but many who are present will *not return again*. Upon others he can lay the duty of seeing that

the room has been well aired, and that the sexton has made it of a comfortable temperature. An ill-ventilated room, or one that is too cold or too warm ; a broken pane of glass, that admits a current of air ; a door which creaks on its hinges every time it is opened or shut ; and, in country places, lamps that are untrimmed and smoking, destroy the pleasure of the congregation and mar the profit of the meeting. These external matters may be arranged by the oversight of the pastor, and his helpers will be pleased by being doorkeepers or by doing other service at the house of God.

The principles of ventilation are generally but poorly understood by sextons. They usually confound warm air with pure air, and keep the rooms closed, to have them warm. The interest of many a service is destroyed by this means. People wonder what is the matter with their preacher and with themselves. They have no life, no enthusiasm. They cannot have any when their lungs are loaded with impure exhalations and their brains oppressed with imperfectly oxygenated blood. I believe that the health of many a minister suffers severely and his life shortened in consequence of breathing impure air. I wish we could have an art school for sextons (if it were only possible to get them together), or a course of lectures, or a good manual to guide them in their duties. Some of them are intelligent and skilful and worthy of praise ; but too many, especially in small churches, are grossly ignorant.

A ministerial friend once related to me a scene he had witnessed. A church in a country place had been enlarged and repaired, and the opening services were about to be held, at which he was invited to officiate. The trustees had bought a thermometer, and charged the sexton that the temperature must be kept between 60° and 70° ; but in no case must it get higher than 70° . The day was a little cool, and the minister noticed the sexton examining the thermometer, which hung against a column. Then he put wood in the stove. In a few minutes he examined the thermometer again, and put more wood in the stove ; after which he examined it again, and seemed to be in trouble. He opened the stove-door, looked again, scratched his head ; and finally, as if a sudden thought struck him, he seized the thermo-

ter with both hands and ran out of doors into the cold air, determined to bring it down to 70°.

The minister will also need to study the temperaments and qualifications of his members for the spiritual work of the church. He should aid the superintendent of the Sabbath school in selecting teachers, and in urging those who are qualified to engage in that work. The love for Bible studies and the zeal for their pursuit will depend greatly upon the spirit which the pastor shall infuse among the teachers. The pastor will also need assistance in visiting the sick, calling upon strangers, and inviting them to the house of God. This can be done most effectually by the co-operation of pious men and women. Persons properly appointed may call upon strangers and may gather many wanderers into the church. Such work, however, is seldom performed systematically or properly without the constant supervision of the pastor. Active associations should also be formed to employ the time and talents of the congregation—such as lyceums or literary organizations for the young; societies for teaching the poor children to sew and to make plain clothing; Dorcas societies, to provide clothing for the needy. The aim of the minister should be to find some work to employ all the members of his congregation, for in proportion as they work for the Master's cause they will be drawn most powerfully to the spiritual life. These benevolent movements of the congregation will also impress the public mind with admiration for the liberal and generous character of the church. It was said of Christ that He was full of grace; and it was this fullness of grace or manifestation of benevolence and kindness to the people which distinguished His whole life. He healed the bodies first, the souls afterwards; and the ministers and churches which show a deep sympathy for sorrow and wretchedness always powerfully impress those around them. In this activity the Roman Catholic churches generally excel the Protestants. Their various orders of women—such as the "Sisters of Charity" or "Sisters of Mercy"—have great facility in procuring aid to sustain hospitals, orphanages, and the like. These women, by their plain garb and by their apparent renunciation of the world, impress the public mind beyond the pale of their church much

more powerfully than do all their ministers combined. Protestantism has the ability to perform a similar work just as well, and without the evils connected with these orders ; but it requires constant activity and associated effort to produce the result.

Active work is also necessary to give to each congregation unity and harmony. An inefficient congregation is usually a troublesome one. Among unemployed people discords and strife are sure to enter. The familiar lines of Dr. Watts, "Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do," are illustrated everywhere. There are men in every congregation who are exceeding troublesome. They annoy the people and the minister. They have an immense amount of surplus energy which is seeking for employment. Such persons need extra work, and must have it to be kept quiet. In one of Dr. Chalmers's ragged schools in Glasgow there was a boy who could not be controlled, and was a constant interruption to the school. After bearing long with him, it was resolved to expel him. The superintendent of the school, seeing elements of power in the boy, plead for one more trial. It was before the days of gas, or even of kerosene lamps, and the school-room was lighted with common candles. These were placed on movable stands, such as were formerly used by shoemakers, and which consisted of an upright stick fastened into a square board, with an opening in the top of the stick, through which a piece of leather was drawn that held the candle. The candles needed frequent snuffing, and so the superintendent appointed this uncontrollable boy general candle-snuffer. From the commencement of his work a change came over him. He entered into his work with spirit, and became one of the best boys in the school. He only needed to be employed. Luther was so restless in school that his master sometimes flogged him several times a day. God had put into him a soul of power, so that he could not keep still. God made him to shake all Europe. Mothers often pride themselves on having nice little boys, that sit still in the nursery and make no noise. Such boys will sit still all their lives, and will accomplish but little for their friends or the world. Give me the boy who cannot keep still ; that upsets chairs and puts every-

thing into confusion in the nursery ; that at school can scarcely keep his elbows out of the sides of his associates ; and I will show you one who has in him the elements of great good, if they can be properly employed. No matter how much steam there is in the locomotive, if it is kept on the track, and has a heavy enough load to draw ; but let it run alone, with a full head of steam, and it will leap the track, and the ruin will be terrible. So these men in our congregations who have so much surplus energy will do mischief, unless they are loaded down with work.

The successful minister must also study the organization of society. In rural districts there is comparatively little organization. The freedom and independence of an agricultural life produce a spirit of individuality. Each family relies upon its own efforts, draws from the earth its own support, and asks but few favours from its neighbours. But as soon as manufactories are established, as soon as towns and cities appear, organized society largely controls individual effort. The employer exercises a constant influence over the employé. The tendency of civilization is to increase associated, and to diminish individual, power. The few control ; the many obey. Such a state of society exists in Oriental lands, that are densely populated. Such was society formerly in Southern Europe. The increase of civilization always tends in this direction, and the counter-balancing power is only to be found in the education of the masses, and in their clear conception of their just rights. Vast corporations are established, where men are bound together, not only by ties of friendship, but by ties of employment and interest. These form a kind of private society, approaching a caste. Thus a kindred spirit exists among railroad men. Their interests are mutual, and almost identical ; and large brotherhoods are formed, as among the engineers, where the right of the individual, as to work or wages, is limited by the will of the society. Similar associations spring up among every kind of mechanics. Latterly, the men who live by days' work, in the *humblest* and most laborious occupations, are also organized. *The pulpit* deals with individuals, not with organizations. *Wa-*

truth comes to every individual heart, and every man acts on his personal responsibility before God; yet the individual thus addressed is influenced by these associations which either help or retard the power of the pulpit. If the tone and influence of the society is hostile to the Church, the individual is either influenced to absent himself from the services, or to receive them with a prejudiced heart; but if the feeling of the association is friendly to the Church, then the individual is influenced to attend the services, and to look with favour upon its ministrations. In this view an almost boundless field opens before the preacher. He must study the various interests and ramifications of these organizations, and must so manage his own conduct and so plan his services as to be most effective in gaining control over the different parts of the community. Societies are like a stick of timber, which must be split according to the grain; and a skilful woodsman will part his timbers always according to their structure.

Who does not know the power of the president of a company over all its subordinates? I have not unfrequently entered a bank and asked some question of a clerk, without being able to obtain scarcely a civil answer; but if I went to the president, and he received me kindly and cordially, the next time I entered, every employé was not only civil, but polite. If I enter a factory, and the owner shows me with satisfaction over the building, the foreman of every department is ready to give me all sorts of information; but if I enter without such an introduction, I enter under a great disadvantage.

I ask your attention to these particular features because at this time the masses of the people, as never before, are arranged in various organizations. They meet in their separate club-rooms. They are addressed by distinguished men; and too frequently an effort is made to array them against the Church and against the ministry, that they may be the better prepared for acts of lawlessness and violence. The Communism and Nationalism of Europe are right against the churches, because there the Church is identified with the civil power. They regard *the Church and the State as one*, and the ministers as inseparably

joined with those whom they regard as their oppressors. This feeling is one of the evils which arise from the union of Church and State; and I am not sure that God may not use it to destroy that unhallowed union. In this country there is no such union, and there ought not to be any such association of thought or feeling; yet the foreigners—and most of our Socialists are foreigners—bring these feelings with them.

It must also be considered that, as the minister ever inculcates the principles of peace and submission to lawful authority, those who contemplate acts of violence or attacks upon the order of society desire to destroy the influence of the minister over society. Hence, the atheistic orator on the platform and the proposer of violence on the sand-lots of San Francisco work in perfect harmony. Their aim is one and the same, and that is to destroy the strongest influence which supports peace and order in the State and among individuals. Christian people must seek some method by which they can better reach the hearts of this people, and antagonize the machinations of those who are plotting evil.

The limits of the lecture will not permit me to discuss the methods by which these organizations or classes of society may be reached. Their structure must be studied; their influential men considered; the influence of society as tending to counterpoise such men must also be considered; and then the minister will be prepared to throw his influence in such a form as to give him power over the hearts of the masses. I must allude to what I think is the greatest barrier. Thus far in this country the difficulty does not consist in great opposition to the churches, but in the growing negligence of its ministrations. These associations, controlling work and wages, become of absorbing interest to the workman. They contribute to the general funds a large part of their surplus earnings, and attend so many private meetings that they have little time to give to the churches, and are thus almost unconsciously led further and further away, and are in danger of being influenced by infidel or communistic ideas. *I know no remedy but in the power of the Gospel, most earnestly preached, and with such power as shall tend to draw the people*

to the services; and then the more perfect identification of the minister with the people among whom he resides. Especially may he endeavour, both personally and by the aid of his people, to draw the children to the Sabbath school, and to instill into their hearts such thoughts and principles as will lead them to the Church, and early bring them to the Saviour. Let him interest himself in the education of the children; let him also inquire into the wants and necessities of the people; let them feel that he sympathizes with them in their labours and sorrows; let him approve their efforts, so far as is proper, to gain a better livelihood; and then he will have an influence and control over them when they are incited to deeds of strife and violence. His membership, thus instructed, may become as salt to save the mass in which they mingle, and may prevent the associations from doing the mischief which designing men intend.

Among collateral methods of usefulness, the platform is one of the most efficient. The minister will frequently be called upon to join in efforts in behalf of benevolent movements. He will be requested to address audiences upon great questions of public interest and concerning the work of various charitable associations. These associations extend beyond the limits of any one church or any one denomination; yet they perform a work which is beneficial to all, and to them the minister should be ready to contribute his influence. Such, for instance, is the Bible Society, in which every Christian should have a deep and abiding interest. Whatever may be his theological views, he supposes them to be found in the Word of God, and the diffusion of that Word will promote the general benefit. The Bible Society, in its benevolent purpose to give the Bible to every man, without comment, presents an example of the purest benevolence and the highest catholicity of spirit. Associations for the promotion of temperance also claim the minister's attention. These associations are sometimes so conducted as to be productive of evil, and, if the minister and religious people stand aloof, they will fall into the hands of men who will oppose the pulpit and really prevent the permanent reform of those whom they are trying to save. These temperance organizations, when rightly

conducted, are, like John the Baptist, forerunners of the Christian Church. Experience proves that unless reformed men are converted and brought into the Church, the temperance excitement soon passes away, and the people become worse than before. The only safety for an intemperate man is in the Divine power that is promised in the Gospel. So also, especially in cities, associations are formed to save the fallen and outcast, to provide for the aged, to prevent cruelty to children and even to animals, to maintain orphan asylums and homes for the friendless and destitute, to furnish education to the deaf and dumb, the blind and imbecile, and to aid the poor and support hospitals. All these plans afford a common ground of Christian work. They are the glory of Christianity, in that they stoop to save the lowest of the low and the vilest of the vile, as well as to lend a helping hand to the wretched and friendless of every class. To aid in labours of this kind is fitting for the minister; for he is not merely the pastor of a church, but a preacher sent from God to save and bless mankind. By these efforts also he will extend his influence beyond the sphere of his own congregation. The friends of these various reforms will love the minister who has presented their cause so earnestly and successfully before the people, and not unfrequently they will be led to attend his ministry.

He will be invited, however, to take part in services where he may not wisely go. Meetings may be held under some specious forms, really to advance the political interests of some individual or to denounce some rival. While the minister should feel a deep interest in everything which affects the interests of his country, and while, as a free man, he has an unquestionable right to cast his ballot for whom he pleases, he should be careful, as a minister, not to take part in political meetings called for the purpose merely of promoting the interests of a party or to advocate the interests of a particular man.

The preacher will occasionally exchange pulpits with the brethren of his own denomination, and in these days of Christian courtesy he will also exchange with those of different *denominations*. The exclusiveness of spirit which once prevailed has in great measure, happily, passed away. While there

may be a few Protestant congregations which fancy themselves to be the true Church of Christ, which have a special gate to Heaven, and close their doors against ministers of other denominations, and hand us all over to the uncovenanted mercies of the heathen; yet the great active branches of the Church are moving steadily forward to a broader platform and to a closer unity. The exclusive churches—though strong and powerful in some localities, as compared with the liberal branches—do not relatively advance with much rapidity. In the pulpit exchanges which are thus made preachers should be exceedingly careful not to violate the rules of Christian courtesy in their selection of subjects. They should strictly avoid controversial topics, and especially those points on which they may personally differ from the creed of the congregation which they address. The great fundamental truths of Christianity are common to all Evangelical Christians; the points on which they differ are comparatively few. As the salvation of a soul does not depend upon the philosophical views which may be entertained, or upon the logical results which seem to flow from them, the true preacher may find an abundance of matter which is held in common, and on which he can address the congregation. Whoever teaches a living trust in the atonement of a Divine Saviour as the only hope for sinful man, and a strict obedience to all that Christ commands, is one of the great brotherhood of Christianity. In this social intercourse of ministers and churches, true courtesy requires a conformity to the order of worship established in the different churches or congregations.

Any effort at proselyting from one church to another should be most strictly avoided. Proselytism is a species of freebooting or piracy, which ought to be as strictly condemned among churches as among nations. I do not object to a change of church relations where there is a change of doctrinal views, or where there is a strong conviction that under another form of church polity the individual may receive greater profit or may be able to do more good to a larger number of his fellow-beings. Such instances may not unfrequently occur. Any individual so changing should be kindly dismissed from their several churches,

with the prayer that the blessing of God may go with them. But when a Christian minister endeavours to draw away members from another communion for the sake of enlarging or strengthening his own, he is not only violating the principles of Christian courtesy, but the principles of common honesty. No minister should seek to enfeeble one church to build up another. Nor is it honourable to intimate that his church is so much more genteel ; has men of business who will patronize young men ; holds the key to the door of select society ; and, therefore, Christians should leave their own communion and enter his. If, under such influences, people are led from one church to another, they are induced to make merchandise of the Gospel, and the spirit of a pure and earnest Christianity is defiled. Such an effort must prevent true co-operation between Christian churches. Nor is there need for such effort, for there are vast masses lying beyond the influence of any church : there is much ground yet to be occupied, and many souls are going to ruin. You are builders, young gentlemen. Let it be your aim to go out into the forest and cut down tall trees, hew them, square them, put them into your building, and raise a beautiful edifice to the glory of the great Head of the Church ; but never descend so low as to steal squared timbers from other churches to build your own.

Closely connected with this subject is the change of ministers from one denomination to another. Where these denominations do not differ in doctrines, but are simply separated on questions of church economy, there can be no impropriety in a minister's passing from one denomination to another, when circumstances seem to justify it. He preaches the same doctrines and is identified with the same general cause. But where the churches differ in doctrine such changes less frequently occur. They are, nevertheless, highly proper when the minister is led to change his doctrinal views. If he becomes satisfied that his has been in error, and can no longer conscientiously preach the doctrines of the church that ordained him, and which supports him for the purpose of preaching doctrines which they believe are in accordance with the teachings of Christ, then his duty, as a

Christian and as a man of honour, is to resign his pulpit and to retire from the ministry of the church whose doctrines he does not believe and cannot preach. I never could understand how a minister could remain with a church whose doctrines he could not accept as his own. Such a man, so far as I can see, has either great obtuseness of intellect or great lack of moral principle. There are denominations with some of whom he could affiliate, and into whose pulpits he would be welcomed—all the world is before him—or he can, as a Mohammedan writer suggests, “set up a ladder and climb to Heaven alone.”

But there are changes, as I believe, occasionally made beyond the bounds of propriety. A minister sometimes leaves a communion in which he was converted and ordained, and joins another, at the same time averring that he has not changed his opinions, and will continue to preach his former doctrines, and that his reasons for that change are simply those of personal convenience and comfort. Such changes I believe to be wrong in practice and disastrous in results. The minister occupies a false position, both to himself and to his hearers. He is supposed by the public to represent doctrines which he does not believe. He cannot preach freely, in points of doctrinal difference, his own particular views, without doing violence to the views of the church which he enters. He suffers restraint, he compromises truth for comfort, and diminishes his own self-respect and spiritual power. He injures the congregation which he addresses, for he unsettles them in their views, and sooner or later strife and discord will arise, and the church will not be a united, homogeneous, or vigorous body in its aggressive movements. The church may for a time be crowded to hear a man of talent and energy who has suddenly changed his fellowship, and it may give evidence of outward prosperity; but at the heart its vital power decays, and in the end discord, strife, and disintegration inevitably follow. The only exception is where, with his change of church fellowship, the minister actually changes his doctrinal views, and cannot conscientiously preach in harmony with the views of his church. But the worst impression is made upon the world, which calls in question the honesty of ministers, and

from such examples believes that they all hold their principles in the market, and are ready to sell to such as will give them the best pay and the most comfort. The injury thus done to the ministry outbalances, as I believe, all the good which such men can perform. The churches and ministers participating in such transactions are weakening the power of the Church over the public confidence more than the efforts of its strongest enemies.

The employment of evangelists to assist the regular preacher in his labours requires great caution. Evangelists are frequently of great service. They are able to say with boldness what the minister would utter with more delicacy. But the pastor should never give the control of the meetings to any evangelist or to any assisting preacher. If he does not hold the control over his meetings, the interest will cease when the evangelist goes away. Persons who are drilled and exercised under a foreign influence will not be fused into the methods of the congregation. They will be comparing the methods of the evangelist with the methods of the pastor, and will complain of the latter if the interest does not continue. I have known a number of places where the visits of evangelists have resulted in an apparent awakening and conversion of great numbers; and yet in three or four months the church has been in a worse condition than it was before the visit of the evangelist—contention and strife having been substituted for peace and harmony—and the benefits of the revival have been lost. Better have no evangelist, however exciting—no brother preacher, however talented—who will not kindly co-operate with you and move in harmony with your plans. Usually, however, the minister will need help in his protracted or special evangelistic efforts. His chief aim should be to make his services so attractive, so spiritual, and so earnest that the Lord shall add daily to the church such as shall be saved. Yet, under special circumstances, he will find that such a general seriousness pervades his audience, such a deep impression is made, as will not only justify, but imperiously demand, the establishment of special services. At such seasons, hearts bow more easily, and multitudes crowd to the services to see and hear, because their friends or acquaint-

ances are deeply interested. Let the minister then get the utmost help he possibly can from his own membership, for the work will do them good; but let him also procure additional aid, either from neighbouring pastors or from evangelists, as he may deem best—ever, however, maintaining the management and control of the services.

There are matters which are not strictly ministerial, but which yet devolve, in many places, upon the preacher. A new church edifice is needed; but it will not be erected unless the minister procure subscriptions. He will sometimes find a congregation severely embarrassed with a debt, which disorders the people and hinders spiritual work; and he will find it necessary to devote much of his time to securing means to liquidate the debt. "These things ought not so to be." After the apostolic example, the churches should select men to attend to all financial matters, that the minister may give himself wholly to the Word of God and to prayer. Yet in many sections of the country, especially in new organizations, very little can be done without the active co-operation of the minister. In these enterprizes he needs great caution and energy. As a leader, he must inspire those with whom he comes in contact, that by his personal influence he may interest his congregation to a proper emulation in raising the very necessary means. At the same time, he must remember that these matters are secondary; that, though he may find it necessary to work on the scaffolding, it is only that he may more successfully build materials into the great spiritual temple.

He will also need great wisdom and tact in his intercourse with his church officers, whether they be called deacons, vestrymen, trustees, or elders. They are the assistants of the pastor in the various departments of church enterprise. They are generally devout and thoughtful men, yet not unfrequently they have marked peculiarities or eccentricities. They had the control of the church before the present minister came; they expect to hold it should he retire. There are a few ministers who have such power over their congregations that they rule and control their church officers with a rod of iron; but there are few such men.

Where ministers have built up churches by their own ability or genius, they may have supreme control; but the ordinary minister can only succeed by kind and careful co-operation with these various officers. Occasionally some of them are so peculiar and obstinate that it is dangerous to antagonize them. I heard Mr. Spurgeon once remark that the difference between deacons and the Devil was, that "if you resist the Devil, he will flee from you. But," said he, "resist the deacons, and they will fly at you."

The Church has laid upon it, by its great Head, the duty of evangelizing the world. Each congregation should do something for this cause, and the minister should be deeply interested in this work. A part of this work will be performed in his own locality, by establishing cottage prayer meetings, mission schools, and occasional preaching services. But the work of Christ requires not only preaching, but sending out others to preach. The Church should plead with its Lord and Master to "send out labourers into the harvest," and should endeavour to aid those so thrust out. The minister should so preach to himself and to his congregation that both he and they, according to their means, shall be liberal contributors to this great work. For this purpose he should be well acquainted, first, with the missionary movements of his own denomination, the fields which they occupy, and the special objects to which the funds collected will be in great measure applied; but for the sake of inspiring his congregation with broader views and greater confidence in the approaching triumphs of the Gospel, he should be also acquainted with the work of all the churches, and be able to present such a connected view of the whole missionary field as shall give confidence of ultimate success, and inspire his people to become active co-workers with Christ. I believe the missionary cause more than any other meets and subjugates the selfish feelings of men. To it we owe the large contributions made to-day to the erection of churches and the endowment of literary institutions. It is true these are not missionary in their character; but the missionary idea, in its immense *grandeur*, so fills the heart and enlarges its sympathy, and so

counteracts the selfishness of every bosom, that it leads to grand and noble giving. In almost every instance the liberal benefactors of institutions have had their hearts touched or opened by this missionary spirit. Other benevolent efforts will demand the minister's attention, and to these let him ever give due consideration, without fearing lest his own support may be endangered.

The minister who most fully identifies himself with every good cause, and who most fully performs all the work properly devolving upon him, will not only maintain a conscience "void of offence toward God and toward man," but will also best secure the favour of the congregation and the approbation of the public. Such a man magnifies his ministry, blesses his age, and honours God.



X.

IS THE MODERN PULPIT A FAILURE?

It has become fashionable in certain circles to speak of the failure of the pulpit. It is represented as belonging chiefly to a past age, and that its power over the minds of men is passing away. Some of the writers for the daily press and some of the contributors to the literary reviews claim for themselves the distinguishing honour of controlling the public mind. They speak of the power of the press, the number of readers whom they reach by their pens, and the immense influence which they exert in public affairs. In their glorification of the press they look upon the pulpit as a diminishing quantity, as an agency once potent, but which is now almost superseded. A few scientists, also, men of intellectual power and extensive learning, but of sceptical views, have wrought themselves into the belief that their discoveries in science have invalidated the authority of the Holy Scriptures. They assail the pulpit not so much on account of the character of its agency, as because they fancy the matter of preaching has become quite obsolete. They extol the triumphs of science, and call in question the very possibility of a revelation from God, and occasionally the very existence of the Divine Being.

I do not desire to underrate the value of the press. It is one of the most powerful agencies, as it is also the offspring, of a Christian civilization. It has its place—a conspicuous place—in diffusing intelligence and in guiding the movements of society. There should be no rivalry—much less should there be enmity—between the press and the pulpit. Each has its proper sphere,

and the exaltation of one does not diminish the glory of the other.

Nor should there be any conflict between the pulpit and men of true science. Their spheres are widely different. The scientist is engaged in tracing the laws of matter and ascertaining the properties with which God has invested it. The preacher is engaged in proclaiming God's mercy and love as revealed to fallen man, and the precious promises which He has given of pardon for sin, of purification of heart, and of a glorious immortality. A few of those who occupy the pulpit very injudiciously assail the scientists, undervaluing their studies and reproaching them for their attachment to science. Sometimes also a few, who are uncultured, or who have failed to keep pace with scientific inquiries, announce propositions almost as absurd as those of the coloured preacher of Richmond, who has recently been lecturing on "The sun, he do move." On the other hand, there are a few scientists who are as ignorant of the Bible as the coloured lecturer was of astronomy, and who make mistakes, if not quite so palpable, yet quite as ridiculous. Between such extremes there is quite a conflict; but between the true minister and the true scientist there should be none whatever. They are engaged in telling different parts of the truth. They occupy different standpoints; and, if the pictures they present do not seem fully to harmonize, it arises from the limits of human vision and from the imperfections of human knowledge. The Eye above and at the centre can alone perceive and comprehend the harmony of the whole.

There is another class of thinkers who are opposed to the pulpit because it proclaims the truths of the Bible, and the Bible pronounces the judgment of God upon their sinful practices. They hate the Bible and all who believe it. Such men talk of the failure of the pulpit, and with them the wish is father to the thought. There are still others so absorbed in business and in various pursuits that they dislike to attend a church or hear a sermon. Possibly, when they chanced to attend, they were not pleased with the discourse, and their dissatisfaction with one sermon has extended to all. Fancying that, because they care

nothing for the pulpit, others sympathize with them, they also glibly talk of its failure.

I do not precisely know what these various classes mean when they use this phrase, nor am I sure that they perfectly understand themselves. A machine is a failure when it cannot perform the work for which it was designed; but the ignorance, incapacity, or negligence of the workman, though a failure on his part, is not properly charged as a failure of the mechanism. So the pulpit is a failure if it is not suited to perform the work for which it was instituted; but it is not a failure simply because some of its preachers may be unskilful or unworthy. There is a clear distinction between failures in the pulpit and the failure of the pulpit. The superintendent of a railroad may be a failure, while the railroad itself may be a great public benefit. A cook may be a failure; but the kitchen remains an imperative necessity. Were I, then, to admit, as I frankly do, that some preachers are failures; were I to go further, and admit that many are failures; nay, were I to admit that nine out of ten are failures, that would not constitute the pulpit a failure, while even one in ten makes it a grand and glorious success.

Is, then, the institution of the pulpit a failure in view of its *design*? It was ordained to proclaim a divine message. That message is the Word of God. Has it not spread that message far and wide? No one pretends that it has changed or mutilated the divine record. For eighteen hundred years that record, in its completed form, has been handed down from age to age. How carefully critics have weighed every word and considered every doubtful meaning! There have been recensions of other works; but no book has ever received a tithe of the attention which has been given to the Bible. Not only has it been carefully preserved in all its completeness and beauty; but it has been given to every leading language on the face of the globe, and parts of it have been translated into over two hundred dialects. While by its agency that message has been preserved and translated, I frankly admit that the pulpit has not accomplished all that could be desired. It was designed to reach all nations and to influence all

people. That work has not yet been fully done ; and to this extent the Christian pulpit has as yet failed to perform its whole duty.

Nor do I claim for the pulpit that it has reached its highest perfection. Preachers have all the frailties and imperfections of their race. Too often they fail to accomplish properly their great work, and there is abundant cause for careful inquiry why the pulpit is not more efficient and successful. There may be a few men who make merchandise of the Gospel, seeking only positions of honour or emolument, who have no settled convictions, and who labour only where they can find the most comfortable homes and the largest salaries ; whose only principles are centred in the question, “ Will it pay ? ” There may be even a few who use the pulpit as a cloak for sinful practices and for vicious purposes. But of all these the percentage is exceedingly small. It is deeply to be regretted that there are any such ; for they not only discredit the cause of Christ, but bring suspicion on their brethren who have high and elevated motives and who are of pure and holy conversation.

One cause of the failure of the pulpit is the lack of appreciation which is shown by ritualists. In the eighty-ninth “ Tract for the Times ” a writer says : “ We would not be thought to entirely deprecate preaching as a means of doing good. It may be necessary in a weak and languishing state ; but it is an instrument which Scripture, to say the least, has never recommended.” Views like these, if entertained, impair the estimation in which preaching should be held. As a natural result, the sermon is very short, and little interest is attached to it, the chief attention being absorbed in the distribution of the sacraments and other parts of the ritualistic service.

Another reason why the pulpit is considered a failure is the lack of sympathy between the preacher and his congregation. I have heretofore alluded to the fact that a wall of partition is rising between the capitalist and the labourer, the higher classes and the lower ; and the masses generally identify the minister with the higher class of society. They contribute chiefly to his support, and have much influence in terminating his appointment.

His dress, deportment, and general habits fit him for association with good society, and the masses are liable to feel that he is not one of them. A few disobey the apostolic injunction, and do not "give attention to reading, to meditation, and to prayer." They are both ignorant and indolent, and sometimes cloak their disinclination to study under an assumed zeal for deep personal piety. Others are not men of one work. With them the ministry is a matter of convenience, while their minds and hearts are intent on other things, and they are devoted to personal matters. This causes the pulpit to be regarded as a profession merely ; respect for the pulpit is diminished ; the divine element disappears ; and people regard his teaching and advice simply as those of a physician or attorney. He is a minister simply to earn a livelihood. In some cases that preparation of heart and that culture of spirit which should mark those who are truly sent of God are not apparent. The minister appears merely as a guest in the social circle, a jovial guest. He is engrossed with the movements of the day. Outside of his pulpit he manifests but little concern for the salvation of the people. He meets them in the street, joins with them in social company, attends public gatherings, and goes with them on excursions. He is absorbed in the general movements of society, keeps a close eye on stocks, ventures into speculation, but shows little concern for a perishing world. He visits families, but makes but little effort to lead the young to the Saviour. He is pleasant with the profligate and the gay, without ever seeming to be concerned for their future welfare. Such ministers, though they may preach like angels in the pulpit, are but of little service to society.

In some instances the minister is shorn of his power by adopting an essay-like style of preaching. He selects his topic and discusses it well, but in a way which does not address the hearts and consciences of his hearers. The pulpit is not the place for essays, however brilliant or sublime. He should pour forth truth from a warm heart for the personal benefit and edification of his congregation. If the preacher is not expecting any present or any immediate result, his message is in great measure paralyzed. *In some instances, also, the minister enters the pulpit rather as*

a task. He preaches because the Sabbath has come and he must find something to say. He has nothing burning in his heart which he longs to utter; no message burdening his own spirit until he has told it to the congregation. He desires to preach a sermon acceptable to his people, and to maintain his popularity. In some cases he is more concerned about learning how he is regarded, than whether sinners have been awakened and brought to Christ, or whether some poor spirit has received more and more of the likeness of the Saviour. All such preaching tends to lower the standing of the pulpit and to diminish its power in the public estimation. Others illustrate chiefly the wisdom and benevolence of God as displayed in creation and providence. They try to imitate Dr. Chalmers in his celebrated sermons on astronomy. Those discourses were remarkable for their ability and illustration, but they were not delivered at his Sabbath services. They were noon-day lectures in the week, as those of Mr. Cook, in Boston, and multitudes of business men turned aside from their offices and stores to listen to his powerful ministrations. They were sermons in every way worthy of their author; yet he preferred to occupy his pulpit on the Sunday with topics more essential to human salvation. Endeavouring to imitate his example only in part, some young ministers devote their efforts to scientific discussion, giving but little other food on the Sabbath; and the hungry sheep look up and are not fed. These topics are highly profitable for lectures; they instruct and elevate the public mind; allusions to such subjects are also of value in the illustration of Scripture truth; but Sabbath sermons on astronomy, geology, botany, or mineralogy, ought never to turn away the attention of the people from the Cross of Christ. That is the only topic of supreme importance and of enduring power. Besides, too frequently, those who attempt these scientific discussions are not perfect masters of their subjects. Others seize upon some topic of the day, and occupy the hour in discussing chiefly the faults or excellences of public men. Some case of embezzlement, or fraud, or the awkwardness of a public executioner, gives such ministers great relief, because they can find something to speak about.

The minister should ever announce great principles which lie at the foundation of society—principles affecting the rights of men and the duties of government; but, valuable as are these topics, they should be but occasional and incidental. Sometimes, passing from these principles, the minister suffers himself to use the pulpit to promote the interests of a favourite political measure, or of some party or individual. Such a course ever lowers the tone of the pulpit, and offends some of the congregation. It requires skill and tact and heroism to utter the high moral requirements of the law of God, and not to avoid such declaration as in times of high public excitement may foster mere party or personal interest. Still worse is it when a minister allows himself to be drawn into a political canvas. Parties are nearly equally balanced, and those in the minority fancy that the personal influence of the preacher may turn a sufficient number of votes to make it triumphant. Hence, they urge him to be a candidate. They dwell upon the great interests at stake, show him what a vast work he may perform, and endeavour to show him that it is really his duty to accept the nomination. Sometimes, alas! he is persuaded to do so. He leaves his pulpit, engages in the canvas, mingles in political scenes, if not in intrigues, and is absorbed for the time being in pending issues. These instances are comparatively rare, and the minister conscientiously feels he is doing right; yet my conviction is that the result is always disastrous, both to himself and to the church. It is disastrous to himself in that his status is lowered, even in the estimation of his political friends. They selected him not because they cared for him or really desired his services, but because he was an available candidate. They flattered him to use him, and they henceforth regard him as a man that may be flattered and used. Had he declined the nomination; had he said, “I have but one work to do—I must preach Christ and Him crucified,” he would have occupied a position of higher moral eminence. But by those outside of his own party he is regarded as one who is ready to use his ministerial influence for the promotion of his personal ambition. If *unsuccessful*, years will pass away before he can regain the high

moral influence which he once exerted. If successful, his thoughts are turned from the pulpit. The questions which he considers, the associations in which he mingles, the applications for office and assistance constantly pressed upon him, divert his attention from that course of reading and from that character of mental study which gave him power and efficiency in the pulpit. As a result, he either returns to his ministry a weaker and less efficient minister than before; or, what is more likely, having embarked on the political stream, he is borne onward by the current, never to return again. Thus, one whom God has called to the ministry is, to that extent, lost to the cause of Christ. But the most disastrous result is that the public understand that those who profess to be called of God have no such convictions as bind them to their work; that they are ready to exchange it for any position which will be either more lucrative or more honourable. As one minister accepts such a nomination, the public infer that all would do so if equally pressed; and, hence, that the ministry is regarded by the ministers themselves, not as a Divine calling, but as an inferior position, to be used as a stepping-stone to something higher. In this way the character of the ministry suffers immensely, while the individual, at the best, can be but slightly benefited. I have stated this in its least objectionable form. Much worse is it when the minister seeks a nomination; when he voluntarily abandons the pulpit and mingles in the strife of politics; or when he accepts a clerkship for an insurance company, or becomes an agent for selling books, sewing-machines, or patent medicines. Such men, I believe, do an immense injury to the cause of Christ. It is proper to say, however, that these remarks apply only to those who have health and strength for the pulpit. When the minister's health becomes so impaired that he cannot perform the duties required of him, it is right for him to engage in any honest calling for a livelihood; or when the Church, for any cause, does not desire his ministerial services, he should be at perfect liberty to engage in other callings and duties, and to retire from the active ministry. Quite possibly, all these cases have their root in the lack of a conviction of a Divine call to the ministry,

or the lack of a deep earnestness of spirit. The earnest man, the man of conviction, who sees a perishing world, and feels God has sent him to help in rescuing it, will not turn aside from his holy calling. He will bear privation, face difficulties, endure hardships, and meet even death itself, rather than to turn to the right hand or the left from the path which God has marked out.

All these cases to which I have alluded contribute to the inefficiency of the pulpit, and to give some colour of reason to those who proclaim the pulpit to be a failure. Yet all these instances form but a small percentage, when compared with the great body of efficient and devoted ministers who are toiling in the Master's vineyard.

But why should the pulpit be singled out as a failure? When we speak of other professions, we do not say that the bar is a failure, because some attorney is incompetent or grossly immoral; or that education is a failure, because some teachers are ignorant and vicious; or that medicine is a failure, because some physicians are unworthy and wicked. Are bankers to be reproached because in almost every city some one has been guilty of embezzlement? Are officers of the Government to be assailed because some have been guilty of fraud? If we look at the vast financial corporations, where men have been selected for their skill and integrity, what a record do we find!

Not only does the pulpit bear a favourable comparison with other professions, but the pulpit of modern times is no less powerful than it was in former ages. One in twelve of those whom Christ selected proved a traitor, another denied his Master, and all forsook Him and fled. Demas loved the present world, and others made shipwreck of the faith. The address of the angel to the churches in Asia Minor shows lukewarmness and error existing then. So all along the current of the ages men have had this treasure in earthen vessels, and have been liable to error and mistake. The preachers of the Middle Ages were scarcely worthy of the name. The survival of the Church in the hands of such men was a miracle of grace. How dark was *the condition* of the Church when the trumpet voices of Luther,

Calvin, and Zwingle rang out in the ears of Europe in the sixteenth century! Read the pages of Bishop Burnet and of Macaulay. How sad a picture of the English clergy they present! Listen to the Archdeacon of Carlisle, when, as late as 1785, he exhorts the clergy against frequenting ale-houses. As I believe, the ministry of to-day is, in mental culture, in purity of life, in deep devotion and piety, superior to the ministry of every period since the apostolic age. In all these respects the modern pulpit is not a failure, as compared with the past.

It may sometimes be alleged that we have no such displays of power under the ministry of the Word as was realized a hundred years ago under the ministry of Dr. Edwards and Bishop Asbury in this country, and under Wesley and Whitefield in England. But it should be remembered that these cases were almost solitary. Now the spirit of revival is abroad. Scarcely a year passes without remarkable divine power being manifested in some of our city churches or in some of the rural districts. Many of the pastors are exceedingly successful; many sermons are preached with divine unction; and multitudes—thousands—are annually brought to the knowledge of the truth. Great impressions are still made. I have been present more than once when whole congregations have risen to their feet, and not unfrequently been freely bathed in tears. I have been present where in a single church hundreds have at one time professed to experience the power of divine grace. While there are no instances so singularly remarkable as have been in the past, I believe there are more conversions in recent years than in any previous period of the history of Christianity.

But what shall supplant the pulpit, if it be a failure? Some of the writers who extol the press, while they disparage the pulpit, fancy that the pen is not only "mightier than the sword," but is more potent than the tongue of fire. Such writers should consider that the press is an outgrowth of Christianity, and should assist, and not impair, the power of the pulpit. It is true that block-printing was known in China before practised in Europe; but it was the invention of movable types that gave the art its great value. This invention was made in Christian lands,

and was applied almost immediately to the printing and spread of the Bible. To-day, what is the power of the press beyond the limit of Christian countries? Such papers as the leading journals of America and England are unknown in lands outside of Christendom. The men who control the press and give it its power are children of Christian mothers, students of Christian schools, and are girt around and sustained by a Christian public opinion. While the press may assist the pulpit, it is the pulpit which indirectly gives life and power to the press. It informs the public mind, incites to reading and study, and prepares a host of readers to receive and enjoy its daily issues. Will any of these men who boast of the power of the press establish a printing-office among the pagan Indians? Did any of them carry the daily press to the Fiji Islands or to New Guinea? Christian missionaries went there, Christ crucified was preached, the people were evangelized, a religious press was established, and a secular press has slowly followed. These gentlemen of the press, with all their excellences and with all their enlightened power, never undertook to civilize a savage nation by means of the press. They have no aspiration for martyrdom or to be eaten by cannibals. The discoveries of a Stanley have not led to the establishment of a daily paper in Central Africa; but they have led to the founding of missions, and they will soon witness the establishment of a religious press. To-day, everywhere, grand as is the press, it is the religious press that throws its first rays of light across the gloom of heathen darkness, and that religious press is chiefly in the hands of men of the pulpit.

What do sceptical men of science propose to give us in lieu of the pulpit? Their objection, I have stated, against the pulpit is not so much as to its agency, as to the message which it proclaims. With them the failure of the pulpit means the failure of Christianity; or, as they sometimes put it, the failure of Protestantism. These forms are essentially the same. The pulpit is the great agency of Christianity. Where it flourishes or fails, so does the other. Protestantism is the most active form of Christianity, and in its services the pulpit occupies a leading position. Such writers even speak disparagingly of ministers

and their work because they dislike the character of the work. But they descend from their assumed lofty sphere when they resort to personalities and represent ministers as men of narrow intellect and of limited culture, of contracted views and of illiberal feeling ; when they speak of them as teaching simply a creed, as having no eye to the beauties of Nature, or no broad conception of the universe in which they dwell ; as not being identified with the great movements of society, or as taking but little interest in the humanitarian questions of the age. Such men also assume for themselves great breadth and universality of view. They see in every religious system an accommodation to the weakness of men ; something which acts upon the fears and hopes of men, interests their affections, and that is serviceable to society in its primitive condition for the preservation of order and for the happiness of citizens. To them the system of Confucius or Mohammed is about equal to Christianity, each being best suited to its country and to its form of institutions. They fancy that all these systems are designed rather for the childhood of humanity, and that with its development and growth they should give place to higher teachings, and that man should be governed only by his native impulses, under the control of his reason. May we not ask : Upon what meat these Cæsars feed, that they have such lofty superiority ? Have we not listened to the teachings of the same professors ? Have they books to read which are not in our hands ? Are not the libraries open to us also ? Has Nature revealed her secrets only to them, or has the Almighty endued them alone with intellectual power ? Nay, are they not also the children of Christian mothers ? Were they not trained in Christian schools ? These men, with all their lofty pretensions, have been educated in institutions founded and endowed by Christian men, and which have gained their prominence under influence of the pulpit. They live in the midst of a generation of readers, trained in the same schools and moulded and fashioned under the teachings of the same pulpit, who receive or reject their speculations. Where to-day is one distinguished scientist born beyond the pale of Christendom ? Where is the scientist who is willing to take

up his abode in heathen lands or among barbarous tribes? Hostile to Christianity though they may be, they are willing to live only under the shadow of its institutions and to enjoy the benefits which a Christian civilization offers. These infidel scientists act madly when they assail the superstructure of Christianity. Were they able to grasp its pillars and overthrow its structure, they would, like a blind Samson, bury themselves in its ruins. Their sphere does not necessarily bring them into contact with Christianity. Their assaults are voluntary and of malice prepense. To give them all they desire, they find the world supported, they know not how; governed, they know not by whom. They study the ages of the world, which, they tell us, has long existed; and the universe, with such unity of law that it must have been evolved from a central magnitude. They tell us that all classes of animated beings exhibit such a similarity of rudimentary structure, protoplasm, or what not, as points to one common origin. They find a material universe; but they find no God. They find matter in multitudinous forms; but they find no spirit. If this be so, their researches keep them wholly out of the field of Christian thought and study, and they leave their proper pursuits when they seek to make a tilt at Christianity.

What do they propose to give us in its stead? Will they take us back to paganism, with its idolatrous worship and human sacrifices? Will they extol Mohammedanism? What is *it* doing for humanity? To-day Turkey is fatally sick under its teachings, and would have died long ago had it not been kept galvanized by England's power. Will they give us the system of Confucius? The very dregs of society in California are raising their hands, as if in holy horror, lest they may be contaminated by the influence of a race educated under *its* teachings. Will they take from poor, suffering humanity all hope of a happier life, from parting friends all thoughts of a reunion, from the loneliness of the grave the promise of a resurrection, from the human bosom all the aspirations of a glorious immortality which now ennobles and elevates Christian society? Must we die, as the brutes, without hope of a future life? Has not the human

heart already enough of beastly power, without an effort being made to quench the power of a spiritual life which can govern and control?

But neither Christians nor Christian ministers are the enemies of science. Why should they be? All science is simply the perception of the thoughts of God; the discovery of what He designed when He spread out the heavens and gemmed the infinitude of space with a myriad of worlds. The laws of light are simply the powers with which the Creator invested it. The law of magnetism, in its subtle power and mode of action, is that with which God has touched the loadstone. The laws of astronomy —what are they but the thoughts of God, as He projected worlds into space and gave to them their orbits and their periods? Why should not Christian ministers love such studies? They reveal the wisdom, the power, and the benevolence of their great Father. Hath not God said, "All are yours"? Are we not "heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ"?

History tells us that the leading schools of Europe were founded either by the clergy, or under their advice and influence. The Protestant clergy especially have been patrons of science. The colleges and universities of America, with here and there an exception, were either founded by Christian denominations, or by states under the suggestion of Christian ministers. They have filled the chairs of presidents and professors, who have taught the principles of science, both theoretically and practically, and have given even to these advanced scientists the greater part of that knowledge of which they boast. How comes it that these men are such a failure, if their students are such giants?

I can accord to scientists nearly all they claim, without in the slightest degree affecting the foundations of my faith. Does the scientist tell me this universe was created millions of years ago? I do not deny it; for my Bible tells me it was "in the beginning," which may have been long before the millions of ages which he claims. Does he tell me that the laws which are in operation to-day have been in operation for millions of years? I admit it; only adding, the great Lawgiver existed before these laws. Does he tell me of the boundlessness of space, of an in-

finitude of worlds? I rejoice the more, for they are all the work of my Father's hands. Does he tell me that the laws of evolution show a development from the less to the greater? I accept all that; for, under the Gospel, from a sinner I became a saint, and from a saint I shall be exalted above the angels, and shall sit down with the Saviour on His throne. I believe in the "survival of the fittest"; for the Christian shall survive the wreck of matter and the crash of worlds. Does he tell me that this evolution dispenses with the Creator? I say: Not so. There are many things claimed for evolution concerning which the verdict of the Scotch jury applies—"Not proven;" yet, were I to admit them all, they would not affect my faith in the wisdom and skill and power of the great Father. I admire the skill of the watchmaker, who produces an accurate timepiece; but how much more would I admire his skill if he made one watch which was capable of producing other watches, each keeping better time than the former, so that there should be evolved at length a watch of such perfection that it should not vary a second in a million of years! If the great Creator created but a germ, and in that germ were all the possibilities of forming a multitude of worlds, with their laws of motion so impressed on each that it should take its place in due time, admiration for His wonderful skill would only be enhanced. Yet all that refers to my dwelling-place; to my earthly surroundings; to the tabernacle in which I dwell. The revelations of God's mercy and love come to me in a different line. They are not evolutions, but emanations. They come upon me from above, like the sunlight and dew of heaven.

These men who talk of evolution claim an infinity of time. I ask how long since this protoplasm developed into a turtle, and the turtle into a monkey, and the monkey into a man? They admit there is no positive record anywhere. Since human history began, there is no instance of any animal ascending to the scale of man. If at all, it must have been away back in the distant ages. Then I ask: Why not give Christianity similar time? She is changing the face of creation; she is transforming *sinners* into saints, savages into enlightened men; she took them

naked, rude, and uncultured, and is clothing them and refining them. She has taken man, who has bowed down to stocks and stones, and elevated him until he feels that he is the son of God, and vicegerent on earth. Why should Christianity be called a failure because it has not yet reached all the sons of men, or transformed them into sons of science? Give her at least as much time to change millions of savages into enlightened humanity, millions of sinners into saints, as, according to their own asking, it takes to change one species into another. We promise that the whole world shall be brought to the foot of the Cross before an evolutionist shall find even a single monkey transformed into a man.

If the Christian pulpit has failed, may we ask in what respect? Is the area of the earth's surface which it occupies diminished? The writers who caricature Christianity particularly object to our sending missionaries to heathen lands; but, in spite of ridicule, they go. Sidney Smith, on bidding farewell to a missionary who was going to labour in a tribe of cannibals, said: "I hope you will not disagree with the man who eats you." But, without fearing danger, he went. Missionaries feel that the world is their parish. They go everywhere, and by their agency the Gospel is triumphing. A large part of India and Southern Africa have in the last half century received Christian missionaries and Christian schools. The large island of Madagascar, previously intensely heathen, is now under Christian sway, and its prime minister attends a convention of ministers. China has opened her doors, and presbyteries, associations, and conferences are organized and actively at work. Japan, that once trampled on the Cross, now listens to the Gospel, and sends her youth to Christian schools. Over a great part of Western and Southern Asia, and of Northern and Southern Africa, the Gospel has been preached by the missionaries of the Cross. In no previous age of the world has the area of pulpit teaching been so rapidly and so widely extended.

Nor has there been any failure in spreading Christianity among people of different languages. The Bible has been translated into the dialects of China, Japan, and most of those in Asia

and Africa, as well as of the Indian tribes of America. There is no instance of Christian teaching or the power of the pulpit disappearing during the present century from any nation or from any language into which it had entered. Christian missionaries have done more than all other men of science combined for the introduction of truth into the languages of the world. No one will pretend to say that the number of Christian pulpits has in any degree during the last half century diminished. Everywhere in Europe, America, Asia, Africa, and the islands of the sea, new church-edifices have been erected in increasing numbers. In the United States, where we especially hear this cry of the failure of the pulpit, the statistics show a wonderful increase. Prof. Diman, of Brown University, states that the number of organized churches in 1777 was less than 2,000; in 1872 there were 72,000; while the increase of population had been from 3,000,000 to 38,000,000—showing a *pro rata* increase of the churches vastly greater than that of the population. We had no census tables giving the value of church property previous to 1850; but in that year the returns show an estimated value of \$87,328,000. In 1870 the report exhibits \$354,483,000, or an increase of more than four-fold, while the increase of population was only about sixty-five per cent. It is true, in that period the increase of sittings did not quite equal the comparative increase of population; but the large foreign immigration must be taken into account. The population had been transferred, but not their churches. The increase of the number of communicants in the various churches has considerably exceeded in its ratio the increase of population, thus showing the influence and power of the pulpit. As I have not these tables in full as to all the denominations, I need not give them as to any. The fact is well known that all the leading denominations are increasing in the number of their ministers, communicants, and church edifices. If it be true that where the treasure is there will the heart be also, the wonderful increase of church property shows the influence of the pulpit in the popular mind, since such vast sums have been contributed to aid its cause. The attachment of the masses to their churches has been strikingly manifested during the times of panic

through which we have been passing. Railroads have passed into the hands of receivers; merchants have gone into bankruptcy; capitalists have failed; but during all that period church-edifices have been erected and improved, Sundays-schools have been gathered, and the number of church communicants has largely increased. During all that period how few churches have been closed; how few sold by the sheriff; and how few turned from their proper use! If it be true that in times of financial embarrassment and distress men will give their money only to what they deem of vast importance, have we not positive proof that the influence of the pulpit and the Church has been in no wise impaired or diminished? In this connection, consider the vast sums given for endowments of Christian colleges and seminaries. I believe the amount given in these years of distress will compare most favourably with the contributions for similar objects given in the most prosperous times.

Where, then, is the tendency to diminution seen? Is the pulpit losing the control of the youth? This question needs only to be asked to be answered. Look at the Sunday-schools throughout the world. In the last fifty years, what an immense advance has been made! Everywhere children are receiving instruction in the churches of all denominations. That instruction also is of a higher character than formerly, the number of intelligent teachers is greatly increased, and the books and papers to assist such constitutes a library in themselves. The increased interest is seen in the establishment of institutes, in the number of books, and in the establishment of libraries. The International Lessons, also, are an indication of the coming unity of the world. No previous age ever beheld one-half of the attention paid to youth as is seen to-day. If we pass out of strictly church work, and inquire for the colleges and training-schools of the land, we find them in a large measure under the patronage and control of some one of the Christian denominations. These men who boast of the failure of the pulpit endow no colleges, establish no professional schools. The number of schools for training ministers has vastly increased within the last fifty years; but not a single school has been founded for the professed.

purpose of training infidels or infidel teachers. The vast majority of scientific professors are to-day attendants on Christian churches and devoted to Christian principles ; but, as the agitator makes himself heard while hundreds of conservatives remain quiet, so a few men of science—a small minority, compared with the whole—have fancied themselves to be the representatives of science, and have arrogated to themselves the right to speak in her name.

Nor is the press so generally in the hands of rationalistic thinkers as they would have us believe. The religious press is an element that these men have never estimated. Every denomination has its organs, which circulate by thousands in its various communities ; and there are Sunday-school papers of which hundreds of thousands of copies are issued weekly. Besides, magazines and reviews are published in the interest of various churches ; and these in point of numbers have a circulation immensely surpassing the issues of those critical papers which assume to be the leaders of thought. The strictly secular press of to-day gives a prominence to religious matters almost unknown thirty years ago. How is the pulpit a failure, when the secular press gives currency to sermons to an extent unknown in previous years ? It is a recognition by the papers that their patrons desire these sermons, and it is an illustration of the increasing power, and not the failure, of the pulpit.

More people attend church-services this year than ever before more children enrolled in the Sabbath-school ; more Bibles published ; more sermons preached ; more Christian scientists and professors ; and there are more ministers, intelligent and cultured, than were ever found in any other era of earth's history. It will not be denied that the pulpit was the chief agent in the overthrow of the idolatry of the world ; of its infanticides and of its gladiatorial exhibitions. As a fact in history, no nation ever abandoned their idols or cast away their imaginary gods but through the preaching of the Gospel, with the exception of a few instances where Mohammedanism has supplanted among some Asiatic and African tribes heathen worship and customs ; but by the preaching of the Cross heathen temples and shrines have been

destroyed. There is not on earth to-day a knee that bows to Jupiter, or Mars, or Venus.

This same influence is exerted still. If in the last half century the area of the modern pulpit is taken, how wide has been the extent of its range, how remarkable its trophies, in that period! It has spread over the islands of the seas, and nations grossly idolatrous have become Christianized and enlightened. The inhabitants of the Fijis, among the lowest of this class, have not only received the Gospel, but have sent native missionaries to other islands. Have not the wheels of Juggernaut been stopp'd in India? And wives no longer burn themselves on the funeral-pyres of their husbands; and mothers do not throw their children into the Ganges, to appease an imaginary deity. With us human slavery has disappeared. To-day the pulpit is the great antagonist of intemperance and of the host of vices which follow in its train. Consider, also, how much of its work has been preparatory. Years have been spent in acquiring languages and in translating the Bible into them. Schools have been founded and native missionaries have been trained. A Christian army has been drilled and equipped, and is, as I believe, about to make an advance such as the world has never seen. The invention of printing and the compass heralded the Reformation. The steam-ship, and railroads, tunnelling mountains and spanning continents; the telegraph, with its multitude of wires encircling the earth; the many triumphs of science and of art—to me portend the coming of an era of universal light and glory. In that era the pulpit shall be, as it ever has been, a trumpet of glad tidings to the sons of men. Every assault upon the pulpit in the past ages has left it stronger than before. It possesses a wonderful vitality; and where the true pulpit sends forth its utterances, other pulpits will catch the inspiration. The preachers of the Reformation aroused the Roman Catholic Church, and Xavier and Loyola enlisted and trained their followers. In England the revivalists of the last century stimulated the pulpits of the Established Church, and in America the different denominations provoke each other to love and good works. The pulpit of to-day should be more powerful than that of any previous age. *The preacher has*

more facilities for a thorough and systematic education ; more helps to a thorough understanding of God's Word ; and, as the ages advance, there is a brighter and more beautiful harmony between the revelation and the works of God. In spite of the votaries of philosophy, falsely so called, who seek to overthrow the Bible, each effort recoils upon its authors, and the claims of the Bible to Divine authorship become more and more apparent. There are glimpses of light, long concealed, which show that He who inspired the Scriptures thousands of years ago was not unacquainted with those secrets of the universe which are being unfolded in these latter times. As some inscription upon the bricks of Nineveh or among the catacombs of Egypt throws light upon the customs of buried nations in the distant ages, so these occasional glimpses connect the testimonies of the past with the discoveries of the present. With all these helps, the preacher of to-day should be able to handle the Word of the Lord more skilfully ; and, as the Holy Spirit loves truth and accompanies the truth to the hearts of the hearers, so we may expect a larger spiritual influence to attend the ministrations of the coming day.

The pulpit is also still greatly needed. It is the great bond of union between the rich and the poor. Few understand the afflictions through which the lower classes pass, or the trials which they endure. Little do the upper classes of society know of their suffering and sorrows ; their loss of employment ; their narrow lodgings, scanty fare, and almost untold anguish. They instinctively shrink from the presence of those who live more comfortably. This unwillingness to associate strengthens sometimes into aversion, and even into positive hatred. Not until the minister, by some act of kindness, or some effort in their behalf, gains their confidence, do they open their hearts, even to him. He does his best to draw them to himself, that he may draw them to Christ. What a lesson do we find in the example of the blessed Saviour ! Wise beyond all human wisdom, pure beyond all human holiness, He stooped to touch the most loathsome and the vile. Crowds followed Him because He did them good, and the common people heard Him gladly. So, also, did the *disciples*. They were gifted with miraculous power to do

the people good, and wherever they went society was stirred to its foundations. They had no money, position, nor influence. They could command no resources, and could confer no benefits. Times have changed. The churches have become strong and influential. The riches of the world are in the hands of Christian nations and communities. While the minister may be able to do but little by himself, he has the public heart and confidence ; he is the bond of union—and the only bond of union—between the various classes of society. Educated and refined, he can associate with the wealthiest and highest ; at the same time, with limited means, he visits amongst the lowest, and his heart is drawn toward them. He becomes a nucleus around which all the elements gather, attracted by his purity, benevolence, and love. Without this sympathy of heavenly origin, which enlightens the heart, we may fear the Communism of Europe.

The remedy for this fearful state of society lies, in great measure, in a faithful and strong ministry, labouring for the poor as well as the rich. Next to this is the provision which is made in Christian countries, especially in America, for the education of their children. In this the United States are in advance of all nations. According to the statistics of Heubner, in every 10,000 inhabitants Russia has 150 children in its public schools ; Italy, 708 ; Great Britain and Ireland, 800 ; Austria and Hungary, 890 ; France, 990 ; Germany, 1,500 ; and the United States, 2,180. The Commissioner of Education in this country reports a higher average even than this.

Another counteracting influence lies in the free and intimate association of the children of all classes in our public schools. Here the rich and the poor meet together, and the spirit of friendship and acquaintanceship binds the extreme classes together. On the platform, too, the son of the pauper and the son of the millionaire stand side by side. Under such circumstances, deep-rooted enmity becomes almost impossible. I am frank to say that I view with no favour efforts to establish parish schools of any denomination for education. They separate classes, and if such a policy should become general the same alienation prevailing in Europe would be realized here. Of

these public schools ministers generally have been the true and faithful friends.

I have now finished, young gentlemen, the present course of lectures. I have invited your attention to the various departments of your great work; I have presented you glimpses of my own experience; I have set before you the duties of the sacred office, in some measure, as they arise before my mind. Before I bid you farewell, may I add a word personal to yourselves? Your exit from this institution and your entrance into the ministry will mark a great era in the period of your lives. You pass from the leisure of the school into the activity of the busy world; from communion with kindred and cultured minds, to become servants of a lost and ruined humanity. You go to lift out of the pit of degradation the most depraved and vicious; to draw the drunkard from his cups, and the young man from haunts of revelry and crime. You need moral courage. You need Christian heroism. Above all, you need power from on high.

We are told that the Roman youth of noble family, approaching years of maturity, entered alone into a private apartment, amid the statues of the gods and of eminent men. In that august and solemn presence, he divested himself of the raiment of his boyhood, and put on the manly toga. Then and there he made his vow to imitate the virtues of the great, to rival them in deeds of power, and to make for himself a name worthy of his kindred and ancestry. So, as you go forth to enter on your life's duties, make a thorough consecration of all your powers to the service of God. Call around you the Unseen. Summon to your thoughts the great men of the pulpit who have shaken and moved the world; and there, with a cloud of holy angels above you and in the immediate presence of the Son of God, whose eyes are like a flame of fire, pray to be clothed with divine power, to be encased in Christian armour, to have your loins girt about with truth, to have on the breastplate of righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace; above all, take the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall

be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit." There resolve that all you are and all you have shall be devoted to this one work; that with all your energy and with all your power you will strive against the power of darkness, and to advance the Kingdom of Heaven, the Church of the living God. Resolve, God helping you, that the Gospel spoken from your lips shall never be spoken in vain, and that you will realize the utmost possibilities of divine power and grace in your ministry among men.

My thoughts glance beyond this assembly, and would peer far into the future. I know not what is before you. God only knows whether you shall have years of labour and toil and danger and triumph, or whether you shall early be called into His own presence. As I look upon you I seem to behold a halo above your heads and rays of light to come down from on high, a tongue of fire that prophesies your mission. Who among you shall shine with the greatest radiance, who shall wear the brightest crown, who shall be nearest to the throne, I know not. It will be he who, according to his talents and his opportunities, does the most for his blessed Master. There are degrees of glory; for, "as star differeth from star in glory, so also is the resurrection." The wise shall shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." In that great day how insignificant shall appear the offices or honours, the wealth and comforts, of the earthly life, compared with the crown which shall be given to those who have conquered souls for Christ! Could I live a thousand years, I would proclaim the Divine message; but almost as soon as we learn how to live, we must die. Had I a thousand lives, they should all be spent in the ministry of the Word. If I could, I would inspire you with the noblest ambition; I would give you strength to bear away the gates of the enemy and to overcome my Master's foes; I would commission you to win triumph after triumph; I would strengthen you so that "one of you should chase a thousand, and two of you put ten

thousand to fight." I have not the strength ; but there is One who has. He has all the power in heaven and in earth, and He has promised to be with you wherever you may go. Into His hands and to His guiding providence I commit you every one, praying " that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him : the eyes of your understanding being enlightened ; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the " saints."







